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LECTURES

UPON

THE PRINCIPAL PROPHECIES

OF THE

REVELATION.

BY ALEXANDER M'LEOD, D. D.

PASTOR OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

NEW-YORK.

Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secrets unto his servants the prophets. AMOS.

But the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. DANIEL.

NEW-YORK:

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District of New-York, ss.

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the eleventh day of February, in the thirty-eighth year of the Independence of the United States of America, *Alexander M'Leod* of the said district, hath deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as author, in the words and figures following, to wit:

"Lectures upon the Principal Prophecies of the Revelation, by Alexander M'Leod, D. D. "Pastor of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, New-York.

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secrets unto his servants the "prophets. AMOS.

"But the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise "shall understand. DANIEL."

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, "An Act for the "encouragement of learning; by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the "Authors and Proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned;" and also to "an act, entitled, An Act supplementary to an Act, entitled, An Act for the encouragement "of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the Authors and Proprie-"tors of such copies during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof "to the arts of Designing, Engraving, and Etching, Historical and other Prints."

THERON RUDD,
Clerk of the New-York District.

ADVERTISEMENT.

To those who heard the Lectures on Prophecy delivered from the pulpit, and at whose solicitation the resolution to give them publicity from the press was adopted, the author owes an explanation.

It was impossible to comprise in one volume of moderate size the whole of his Discourses on the Apocalypse: and it would be indiscreet to present to the subscribers two volumes instead of one. He has pursued a middle course. He has comprised, so far as the text would admit of it, the prospective history of modern times, in the Lectures which he has published; and he has reserved the remaining Lectures for a subsequent publication at a convenient time.

TO THE

REVEREND DR. JOHN B. ROMEYN.

My Dear Sir,

I SEND you this Volume, across the Atlantic, as a tribute of respect and friendship. Should it live beyond the age which gave it birth, this address will serve, at least, to show my sense of your private worth, as well as of your public usefulness and respectability. There are very few men more competent than yourself to judge of the merits of a work on the Apocalyptical predictions. Of all my literary friends, too, you have been the first and the most intimate. Our acquaintance commenced, while engaged in preparatory studies for the ministry of reconciliation, and was speedily ripened into a mutual

friendship, which has since continued close and uninterrupted.

I shall always remember with pleasure the select society, in which we both first employed our pens in writing for the public. Our juvenile essays were produced for the MARKSMAN, on the banks of the *Mohawk*, in connexion with two other valuable friends. One of these, the Rev. Dr. Linn of Philadelphia, alas! was recalled from the service of the church militant, in the morning of his life and his usefulness: but not until he acquired merited celebrity, and chastised with his pen, the man, who ventured to compare Socrates with Jesus Christ—that distinguished philosopher and arch-heretic, Dr. Priestley. Our other fellow-member, Judge Miller, who now holds a seat in the Congress of the United States, still cherishes, amidst the cares of legislation, the friendship of early years. He will join me in the hope, that your voyage may prove the means of re-establishing your health; that your visit to Great Britain, and to the continent of Europe, may

prove agreeable and instructive; and that you may be restored in due time, to your friends, to your flock, and to your country,

With great esteem,
I am, Dear Sir,
Your affectionate Friend
and Fellow-Servant,

ALEX. M'LEOD.

New-York,
Feb. 12, 1814.

THE Reader will be good enough to add with his pen, to the end of the first sentence, in the second paragraph of page 158, the following words as necessary to complete the sense; "exclusively by his own merit."

The sentence will then read thus;

It appears to me altogether improper, therefore, to represent this impostor as rising from obscurity to eminence exclusively by his own merit.

PREFACE.

HOWEVER diversified may be the opinions and the wishes of Christians, relative to ecclesiastical and political concerns, there is one principle, in the belief of which all are united—THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH. This truth supports their hopes; because it gives assurance that *His* will shall be done, and that the result of the present shaking of the nations, shall be the establishment of righteousness and peace.

The prophecies of the Apocalypse are on this account peculiarly interesting to men of understanding: for they not only illustrate the doctrine of the divine Sovereignty, and afford in their accomplishment additional evidence of the inspiration of the sacred Scriptures; but also give a correct outline of the prospective history of both the Christian church, and of the nations whose policy immediately affects the cause of true religion.

All men are, from the constitution of human nature, inclined to look forward as far as possible into futurity; and the man of wisdom will avail himself of his foresight in all his plans and pursuits. Human prescience is indeed very limited; and, in the common concerns of life, depends upon the acuteness of our penetration, and the accuracy of our judgment. In the more important and interesting concerns of religion, divine revelation comes in aid of our natu-

ral faculties. He, whose prescience is eternally perfect, reveals in prophecy "the things which shall be hereafter." Of the Governor of the universe it is impossible to form any correct idea, which does not exclude imperfection. He is not wiser to-day than yesterday. "His understanding is infinite." Having himself a perfect comprehension of all the circumstances which enter into the constitution of the lot of man, whether considered in an individual or collective capacity, it is in his power to give the history of future, with as much facility as that of past events. To doubt this, is to deny his perfection. To treat his predictions with neglect, is inconsistent with becoming reverence for his wisdom and benevolence.

From these remarks, it will appear obvious, that the PROSPECTIVE HISTORY, which the wisdom of heaven has provided for the Christian world, is no less desirable, as an object of benevolent curiosity, than it is useful as a motive of action, to the intelligent Christian and the virtuous statesman. Men, accordingly, who hold the first grade in the scale both of learning and native talent, have employed a portion of their time in the exposition of Scripture predictions. It would be difficult to select from the list of their names, those who have the best right to be first mentioned in this connexion; but every scholar, however ignorant of the catalogue of Scripture expositors, has heard of the man who so ably explained the law of nations, in relation to both war and peace, and of him who demonstrated the laws which govern the material world—GROTIUS and Sir ISAAC NEWTON. Both these men have furnished commentaries upon prophecy.

The author of the Lectures now presented to the public, has had occasion to make frequent mention of the most distinguished writers on the same subject. Their names often sanction the interpretation which he gives; and when he dissents from their opinions, respect for their merit required that he should assign his reasons.

To English literature we are certainly indebted for the best explanations of the Revelation; and the more recent works, published in Great Britain, afforded many facilities for the present undertaking. The writers of that nation have not, however, succeeded in keeping themselves free from the bias of political opinion. The terrible contest which at present agitates the whole family of nations, scarcely tolerates a neutral, even in the literary or theological world. The admirers of the French Revolution have magnified its importance, in its ultimate tendency to meliorate the condition of society; and the advocates of the British policy have sought in prophecy for arguments to strengthen opposition to the Gallic conqueror. It is with the expounder of prophecy as with the writer of history—difficult to hold a pen uninfluenced by prejudice or partiality. Although the facts remain undisputed and unaltered, various affections will impart a variety of colouring to the representation. The human mind too, is prone to attach undue importance to objects which, somehow, become very interesting, and, of this description are cotemporary events and characters. The predictions therefore, which are now fulfilling, and about to be fulfilled, have been most subjected to misinterpretation: and both the events and characters of the

present age, have been complimented with applications of certain prophecies, which respect quite other persons and periods. In relation to chronological considerations also, a very natural mistake has been frequently committed. More regard has been paid to the splendour of events, and the contiguity in respect of time, than to the connexion of moral causes with their proper effects. Nor has the principal design of the prophetic history always been kept sufficiently in view by the several expositors. The Apocalypse is intended less for personal than for social improvement in religion. It particularly illustrates the history of those GREAT MORAL PRINCIPLES WHICH AFFECT THE PUBLIC INTERESTS OF TRUE RELIGION; and neither the revolutions of nations, nor extraordinary men, are otherwise esteemed worthy of notice, than as connected with the prevalence or depression of such principles.

To this idea the author has given a prominent place in these Lectures. He generally follows in his interpretation the path of Bishop Newton, as improved by Mr. Faber; but on several interesting subjects he dissents from both these eminent expositors. Connecting the prophecies of Daniel with the book of Revelation, he has given an outline of the history of the moral world, in the order, and within the period, contemplated in these inspired writings. He has endeavoured faithfully to apply the fact to the prediction, and to make true religion the meridian line to which the several parts of the crowded map are referred.

New-York, Feb. 1814.

INTRODUCTORY.

LECTURE I.

Rev. i. 3....*Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.*

THIS introductory benediction is repeated with little variation toward the close of the Apocalypse, Chap. xxii. 7. "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." It bespeaks your attention, Christians, to the course of expository lectures upon which I now enter. The subject of these lectures, is the principal prophecies of the book of Revelation.

Something, I am aware, is necessary in order to overcome the prejudices which very generally prevail, even among the disciples of our Lord, against the careful study of a portion of sacred scripture which is considered as too obscure to be well understood, and too remote from the immediate comforts and duties of a life of godliness to be made the subject of pulpit discussion. No words which I can use, appear to me so well calculated to obviate such un-

just and pernicious prejudices, as those which have been read as the text of this discourse, and which I repeat in order to explain. *Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.*

The Prophecy is the characteristic name, which, by divine inspiration, is given to the book which closes the canon of scripture, and which is entitled "The Revelation of John the Divine." It contains, it is true, like other parts of the sacred volume, precepts, promises, doctrines, suitable reflections on the past, and a description of many things actually existing at the time: yet so great a proportion of it is devoted to a prediction of the future, as to justify the application of this title to the whole work.

The time is at hand. The writer and the first readers of the Apocalypse lived at the commencement of the time of which the book gives the prospective history. The whole period contemplated is indeed a very long one. Since this prophecy was written, many generations of men have passed away to the invisible world; and still it may be said with truth to you who read and hear, "the time is at hand." The most important era referred to in these predictions is still future, and rapidly approaching. It is indeed with respect to some always at hand.

The grand period, ONE, as to its character, includes MANY distinct periods, distant too from one another, which, whether taken severally or collectively, constitute the time in which the Son of God manifestly obtains the victory over all opposing power. This

is emphatically "the day of the Lord." Although this great day is, as it respects the successive generations of men, removed to a vast distance, it is usual with the inspired writers* to announce it as near, because to every individual this is in fact the case. The day of his death is to every man the day of Christ's coming.

He that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, are those who study and understand the book of Revelation, and who regulate their hearts, their lives, the principles which they embrace, and the connexions which they form, agreeably to that view which it gives of true religion in respect to the great social concerns, both civil and ecclesiastical, of the several nations of the earth. "KEEP those things which are written therein," signifies more than to preserve the text uncorrupted. Τηρουντες, the word here employed, implies obedience to the commandment—the exemplification of the great principles unfolded in this prophecy, in our christian practice.†

Blessed is he that readeth—they that hear—and keep, &c.

This is our encouragement to study and practically apply the book of the Revelation. Those who understand its principles and reduce them to practice, shall enjoy peculiar blessings from the Lord. "God

* Isa. xiii. 6. Joel ii. 1. Phil. iv. 5. 1 Pet. iv. 7.

† ΤΗΡΕΩ is used to describe the sum of Christian obedience in the great apostolical commission, Matt. xxviii. 20. See also xix. 17. and xxiii. 3. And the apostle John frequently employs it in the same sense.

is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless; and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it." Our Lord assures us that he will confer his blessings on all who attend to the doctrines of the gospel, and yield to his holy precepts evangelical obedience. Luke xi. 18. Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it. John xiii. 17. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. Besides, however, the felicity which the Christian enjoys through the medium of his knowledge of the great doctrines of the gospel, and of his practical holiness, there is a special beatitude in the understanding of the peculiar predictions of the Apocalypse. This book affords its proper aliment to that noble disinterestedness which belongs to the Christian as a member of the church of God: for in this book, the state of the Church is displayed in relation to her members and her Head, her friends and her enemies, her troubles and her triumphs. Such views are always highly interesting. "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! for from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee."

This exposition of my text, will, I trust, supersede the necessity of apology for endeavouring to turn the attention of the congregation during one

part of the public exercises of the Sabbath, to the words of the prophecy of this book; and it justifies me in laying before you in this introductory discourse, The true nature and design of this prophecy—The character of its style, and the proper mode of interpretation—Together with the several uses to which it is subservient.

I. What is the nature and design of this prophecy?

It is of importance in entering upon the study of "the Revelation," to form precise ideas of the general nature and design of the whole system of sacred prophecy, and of the special design of this remarkable part of the system. The word prophecy is used, both in scripture and in common discourse, with some latitude of signification; but it is not difficult to discover its proper meaning. Προφητεια is applied in the New Testament to any declaration delivered by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost,* to the power or gift of declaring divine truth,† and even to the actual exercise of such gift or faculty.‡ But it principally signifies the prediction by inspiration of future events. This is the proper meaning. The other significations must be referred to figurative usage. It is observable too, that in all these applications there is included the idea of divine agency; and the common use of the word also implies the prediction of what is future.

But we are not to confound with prophecy, that which is no more than a *conjecture* of future proba-

* 1 Pet. i. 20. † Rom. xii. 6. ‡ 1 Thess. v. 20.

bilities; nor even that which is a certain prediction of the effect from a correct knowledge of the causes in action. "Human sagacity," said a man of a very sound and discriminating mind,* "can foresee events that happen according to the uniform course of nature, or events of which there are probable causes existing at the time when they are foretold, yet innumerable things are beyond its reach; nor is there any true history in the world, but whoever reads it, and knows the truth of it, is fully persuaded that it was impossible to have written it after the events happened, without sufficient information, or before the events happened, without inspiration, which is the only way of sufficient information of things to come." The true idea of prophecy is the prediction by divine inspiration of future events not foreseen by human sagacity. The power of predicting is alone from God, and depends on that foreknowledge which was from the beginning employed about whatsoever comes to pass; and the exercise of this power on the part of the prophets is uniformly under the divine direction, without being in any case, or in any degree subject to the mere will of man. The objects, consequently, about which it is employed, the time and circumstances with which the prediction is connected, and the degree of perspicuity, and minuteness of detail with which the event is laid before us, depend entirely upon him whose understanding is infinite. *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

* Maclaurin.

It is certainly a legitimate inference from this fact, that the design of the system of prophecy is great and important. It is worthy of its Author. But for a knowledge of that design, we must submit to be taught by a divine instructor. It may be said of this, as of the other parts of the system of the grace of God toward men, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." In vain should we attempt to discover otherwise the objects, most fit in the history of the universe, about which Jehovah should employ the powers of his prescience. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." The wisdom of the world is foolishness. That, however, which is declared in the scriptures to be the object of the system of prophecy is one, which in the estimation of the most intelligent men, must appear both important and magnificent. An object for which the pillars of the earth are upheld, which angels contemplate with an interest unconceivable by mortals, and which heaven hath destined to become the perfection of beauty; that holy empire which is composed of redeemed men, predestinated to shine in perpetual glory, with the Son of God at their head as their King and Lawgiver. Jesus Christ, and his Church in him, is the grand object of scripture prophecy. *The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.* "A Spirit of prophecy" said Bishop Hurd at the Lincoln's Inn lecture, "pervading all time—characterising one person of the

highest dignity—and proclaiming the accomplishment of one purpose the most beneficent, the most divine that imagination itself can project."

The prophetic system is but the prospective history of the mediatorial kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it embraces nothing else but for the sake of its connexion with this object. The Apocalypse is in a distinguished manner the testimony of our Saviour, and the history of his kingdom. It is *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass.*

The Head of the church foresaw the danger to which his people would be exposed in that dark and painful period which intervenes between the apostolical age and the millennium. He foresaw the opposition of the nations to his own kingdom. He foresaw his people scattered over these nations; influenced and polluted by their customs and their maxims; severed into factions; often turned against one another to subserve the policy of their enemies; generally oppressed and persecuted by the powers of the world; and he placed this book in their hands to be their light and their comfort. It is the peculiar object of this book to describe the true state of the moral world, to point out the abuse of the institutions of heaven which has obtained in society, and to prescribe the duty of faithful men in relation to the corrupt social establishments which from time to time should exist, in opposition to that moral order which the gospel of the kingdom of God promises ultimately to introduce in Church and State over all the

nations of the earth. In all the prophecies of the Apocalypse, respect is accordingly had not to the gratification of an idle curiosity; but to our instruction and comfort. The great outline of the events predicted may be previously discovered with certainty; and the nearer the time, of the accomplishment of the prophecy, approaches, the minute circumstances may be the more accurately traced. The exact correspondence of the fact with the prediction is not however to be seen until the event comes to pass. "God gave these and the prophecies of the Old Testament," said Sir Isaac Newton, "not to gratify men's curiosity by enablingthem to foreknow things; but that after they were fulfilled, they might be interpreted by the event, and his own Providence, not the interpreters, be then manifested thereby to the world."

II. What is the character of the prophetic style, and what the rule of interpretation?

Every one who is acquainted with the writings of the prophets, has undoubtedly remarked that the expressions which they use are highly figurative. Some recent expositors have on this account pronounced the prophetic style one *sui generis*—a symbolical style radically distinct from every other species of composition. Dr. Johnston considers it as of this description, and distinguishes the Hieroglyphic from the simple symbol.* I nevertheless am entire-

* "There are two characters in this language. The one is uniformly called an Hieroglyphic, and the other a symbol, in the Commentary. An Hieroglyphic is a complete figure, made up of

ly unable to see either the necessity or the use, of considering the style in which the prophets wrote as essentially differing from that of every other part of the Bible, or of subjecting it to quite different rules of interpretation. The Oriental manner of expression in general, and that of the sacred scriptures in particular, abounds in splendid imagery; and the descriptive part of divine revelation is fully as figurative as the predictive. Nor can I at all admit that predictions are never delivered in plain alphabetical language. The truth is, the writings of the prophets, even in those parts in which the style is truly symbolical, are subject to the same rules of interpretation which obtain in all other writings. In every composition we find figurative language; and in several authors of our own age we find an abundant use of the metaphor. Both the metaphor and the hieroglyphic are analogous to historical painting; and there is not a better test of the correctness of a metaphor than the one proposed by Dr. Blair, who in matters of criticism is excellent authority, namely, that we should try to form a picture of the several parts, and see how they correspond. It is not however to be denied that this figurative style requires, in order to be understood, a particular acquaintance with the several sources from which the principal part of its imagery is drawn. The earlier prophets selected their symbols from the well-known customs and arts of the Hebrews and the neighbour-

the assemblage of two or more parts into one picture. And a symbol is a single detached member." *Introd.* p. 4. *Commentary on the Revelation.*

ing countries, Egypt and Chaldea. The writers of the New Testament join to these the customs of Greece and Rome. The principal sources from which the Apocalypse draws its imagery are the following, viz. The natural world; the history contained in the scriptures of the Old Testament; and the ecclesiastical polity of the Jews, including both the Temple service and the Synagogue.

It is obvious from these considerations, that in order to understand the phraseology of the book of Revelation, it is necessary not only to have contemplated with discernment the economy of the natural world, but moreover to be well versed in scripture history in connexion with profane, and to be familiarly acquainted with the ordinances of religious worship, as they were established in Judea.

Such attainments will qualify a man for understanding the *language* of the prophecy of this book; but much more is necessary to understand the *prophecy itself*, and be able to apply the prediction to its proper event. That event must be itself understood. A knowledge of true religion as differing from mere forms of godliness, from priestcraft, and superstition, and a due measure of acquaintance with history, civil and ecclesiastical, are indispensably necessary to him who would point out the accomplishment of the Apocalyptical predictions. We have therefore no reason to wonder that this book is not well understood in the Christian Church. No man is likely to make proficiency in any branch of knowledge without entering into the spirit of it; and it is impossible to enter into the spirit of the instruction communi-

cated in this book, without such religious discrimination as will distinguish Christianity from the corrupt establishments of mere politicians.

Before I give you the rules of interpretation, I think it necessary to meet an objection made to the style of the prophecies upon the score of obscurity. It inevitably follows from the nature of the prophecy itself, and the character of the style in which it is delivered, as already described, that it is not easily understood. While this fact is both admitted and accounted for, it affords a striking evidence of that wisdom which inspired the mind, and superintended the pen of the sacred writers: but we cannot admit that any sentence in this book is absolutely unintelligible, or that the phraseology is undeterminate. To a novice in the sciences, the expressions of the Mathematician, the Botanist, and the Chymist, however precise, will appear obscure; and may be supposed to be a language *sui generis*. But a proficient in these several studies will not complain of the obscurity of the style which philosophy finds it necessary to employ in the instruction of her pupils. It is not in obtaining a knowledge of the words, so much as in understanding the subject, that the difficulty lies, in respect either to theology or any other science. The same observation will apply to the system of prophecy.

Absolute unintelligibility is not to be affirmed of any part of the Bible. This would be inconsistent with the wisdom and goodness of our heavenly instructor, because it would render such part entirely unprofitable. The scriptures are no further a revelation, than they are

intelligible. *He that speaketh in an unknown tongue, speaketh not unto men; for no man understandeth him. So likewise except ye utter words easy to be understood, ye shall speak unto the air. If I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me. In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.** A Revelation, nevertheless, designed for men of every capacity, of every nation, and of every age, must, from the nature of the case, prove to many, in any given age, in some instances, obscure. The apostle Peter says of the epistles of his beloved brother Paul himself, notwithstanding his constant use of great plainness of speech, that *they contain some things hard to be understood.*† This also is the case with the prophetic part of scripture, independently of all peculiarity of phraseology. No simplicity of diction could render a prophecy completely intelligible in all its circumstances, even after its accomplishment, to a person otherwise entirely ignorant of the fact to which it referred; and much less are the prophecies which remain to be fulfilled, at the distance of ages, to be comprehended by those who previously have no idea of the subject of which they treat. Precisely for the same reason, a detached paragraph in the celebrated histories of Hume and Robertson, would appear unintelligible to a reader ignorant of the connexion; and utterly unacquainted with the era and the facts under contemplation.

* 1 Cor. xiv. 1—19. † 2 Pet. iii. 16.

There is also another consideration which will tend to illustrate this subject. The same prophecy has, in some instances, reference to more than one event. These events may be perfectly distinct, as to time and some other circumstances, although one, as to the special intent of the prediction.* This frequently happens in those instances in which the prophets for the comfort of believers under both Testaments, speak of the coming of Christ, of his kingdom, and of the consequent deliverance. Under the old dispensation too, which made provision for many typical persons and events, the same prediction frequently respected first the type, but secondly, and chiefly, the antitype.†

We have admitted, you perceive, that there is some difficulty in ascertaining the precise event predicted

* This principle is explained at great length by Bishop Hurd. *Sermons on Prophecy.*

† Real or affected ignorance of this principle, characterizes that work of the once celebrated Thomas Paine, which he calls *An Examination of the passages in the New Testament, quoted from the Old, and called prophecies concerning Jesus Christ.* This work was published by the author in New-York, a little before his death; and shows, that he who confessedly outlived personal respectability, and all decency of manners, also had lost that vigour of intellect, for which, however frequently prostituted, he was once remarkable. He selects a few of the least prominent passages quoted from the Old into the New Testament, and showing that these had some reference to persons who lived before the coming of Christ, he infers that they were misrepresented when applied to our Lord. This deceitful attempt, as dishonourable in its plan, as it is feeble in its execution, can injure none but such as are already viciously inclined, or exceedingly ignorant. There is however a work upon the same subject, constructed with a very different design, and leading to a different result, worthy of attentive perusal; *An Essay on the Prophecies re-*

by the prophets, and have also accounted for this difficulty, as well from the nature of the subject, as the character of the style in which the prophecy is written. It is not to be forgotten, in connexion with these remarks, that the degree of obscurity in which the prophecies are involved perfectly accords with the wisdom of God in his works of creation and providence. An elegant drapery thrown around the works of nature hide their secrets from the view of the negligent or superficial observer; and shall we suppose that the vast scheme of Providence should be comprehended by the sons of men? or that the whole system of prophecy should be understood by those who are to act, frequently in ignorance of the design, a prominent part in its accomplishment? The Lord governs the sons of men, effectually indeed, for the fulfilment of his purposes, but yet without destroying the nature of their moral agency. He governs them *as* men, acting freely, and being accountable for their conduct. It was never intended, therefore, that the prophecies should be fully understood by those who are destitute both of candour and of piety; men who would strive to prevent the event foretold; but who, as the case stands, may be the agents in bringing it to pass. "Is it ever to be supposed that if the individual Jews who crucified Jesus had clearly seen, from the ancient prophecies, that

lating to Messiah, by *Maclaurin*. No man who possesses sufficient intellect to comprehend the reasoning employed by this very sensible author, can rise up from a perusal of the Essay, without acknowledging that he has proved from the Old Testament scriptures, that Jesus is the Christ.

he was the Messiah, and that his kingdom was not of this world, and yet that with wicked hands they were to crucify and slay him, that they would have done so?"* Such is certainly the fact, as affirmed by the spirit of prophecy, Dan. xii. 10. "The wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the WISE shall understand."

Every expositor has deemed it necessary to intermingle with the explanation of prophecy some rules of interpretation, or to specify, in a more formal manner in his introduction those principles, upon which he designed to proceed. Mede, Dabuze, Warburton, Hurd, Johnston, and Woodhouse, may be consulted upon this subject, with great pleasure and profit, by those who have leisure and inclination for such studies. I deem it sufficient for all useful purposes to lay before you, in the most simple form, those undisputed principles upon which the language of prophecy is to be applied and understood. We shall have occasion in the course of these lectures to enter into more minute detail in proving the necessity of their application to certain specified cases, in which I am constrained to differ from some of the respectable expositors who have gone before me. At present I state only the following

Rules of Interpretation.

1. Ascertain, from the connexion, the subject which the prophecy has under consideration; and whatever

* Johnston's Comment on this text.

may be the person or thing referred to, let it be contemplated not in a detached character, but as connected with the entire system of which it is a part.

2. Consider from what source the symbol or symbols used in the prophecy are derived.

3. Consider the place which the symbol employed in the prophecy literally occupies, and the uses which it answers in the system from which it has been selected.

4. Apply the figure, according to correct analogy, to the corresponding part of that subject of which the prophecy treats.

It is upon these principles we explain all figurative language wheresoever we find it; and the only thing taken for granted in such interpretation is, that the writer understands the power of language, and is consistent with himself. The propriety of this admission will not be denied, so far as it respects the scripture style, by those who believe that *holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

III. It is proposed to review the principal uses which the study of this prophecy answers.

Besides the particular object to be attained by the exhibition, beforehand, of the great concerns of the Church of God, as furnishing a mass of information not otherwise within our reach, prophecy answers

many important collateral uses. The blessings pronounced by the divine Spirit upon the head of him who attends to the book of Revelation, render it certain, that this part of the prophetic system is intended to be extensively beneficial. Experience will justify our utmost expectations. Actual knowledge of the contents of the Apocalypse, gives a happy excitement to all our religious principles of action—affords a standing miracle in support of the inspiration of the Bible—supplies ample proof of the decrees and providence of God—and furnishes unceasing warning to Christians to separate themselves from connexion with the terrible apostacy which it reveals to view.

1. The book of Revelation is remarkably calculated to excite our faith and patience; our hope and zeal in the service of God. The perfections of Jehovah; the dignity, and excellence, and affections of the Messiah, the Son of God and the Son of man; the labours, the trials, the triumphs, and the final safety of the saints, are repeatedly brought into view, and are held up in so clear a light, that we are made to feel an interest in the lot of the righteous. Our religion assumes more of the social, and less of the selfish character. We become identified with the whole family of God, not only in fact, but also in our own uninterrupted apprehension. We are animated with a corresponding magnanimity, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt."

To the "man of understanding," this book illustrates both the general principles of human action, and the course which he, who sits enthroned on high, pursues in the administration of providence. It derives a light from authentic history, and it reflects a light upon the facts and the reasonings which fall within the legitimate province of the historian. The mere knowledge of detached facts is of little value. An exposition of the character and the springs of human action, of their causes and consequences, and of the purposes of the Governor of the universe in relation to man: these are the great ends which history subserves, and these ends are in the best manner accomplished in the species of composition now under review.

Nor are its uses limited to those who completely understand the events foretold in the predictions. The character of the event; the principles of human conduct in the exercise of which it is brought about; the design of heaven in its permission and control; the whole doctrine connected with it may be understood, and will prove interesting and instructive, independently of a knowledge of the names of agents, and the proper dates. The crime, the folly, the vanity of men of high and of low degree, are depicted. The patience, the ardour, the benevolence of the virtuous, are held forth to imitation. The divine wisdom, and power, and mercy, and justice, are exemplified; and an excitement is given to religious emotions of every description, by the expectation of great events, even in those cases in which we remain ignorant of the precise point in actual his-

tory to which the prophecy has respect. The doctrines, taught in connexion with the prediction, of themselves, afford increase of useful knowledge; give exercise and improvement to every virtuous principle; and thus conduce to the perfection of the man of God.

2. Prophecy is a standing miracle in support of the divine inspiration of the holy scriptures.

The book which is emphatically called the Bible, is confessedly the most important of all literary productions. The magnitude of its object, and the excellency of its execution, are unequalled by any other composition. The antiquity of its history; the sublimity of its doctrines; the purity of its morality; have ever recommended it to the attention of men of information. The simplicity and fidelity of its descriptions, render it interesting to literary curiosity; and the grandeur of its eloquence will ever make it the companion of the man of taste. Satire, sophistry, affected contempt, and vulgar abuse, have already, and for a long time, employed their most potent efforts to bring the sacred volume into disrepute; but their labour is very vanity. Its intrinsic excellence puts at defiance the wisdom of the world. The evidence of its authenticity is copious, and clear, and strong.

The Creator of the world has endowed its human inhabitants with a capacity of knowing him, their Lawgiver and their Judge. In his works, he reveals his perfections to our whole race, and we are left

without excuse if we do not serve him. In his condescension he gave more ample means of knowledge and correction. He sent his word for our instruction. Reasoning and argument upon what is before us, is a slow mean of acquiring any knowledge, compared with conversation with one of superior intelligence. A few lectures will communicate to a youth the result of the observations and the reasonings of a sage. He who made the eye and the ear, *can* communicate knowledge to man, which otherwise must remain for ever beyond the reach of our faculties. He *did* so. "God in sundry times and in divers manners spake unto our fathers." He speaks also unto us in his word. It is sufficiently attested too, that it is his word—that "we do not follow a cunningly devised fable."

He affected the minds of the prophets with an irresistible conviction that he himself spake unto them. It is in the power of Omnipotence to preclude the possibility of deception. What he said, was a revelation to them. It was accompanied with evidence of its supernatural origin. But how were others to be affected with such conviction? Shall our faith depend entirely on the testimony of men? It need not, it ought not, it must not. The prophets, the evangelists, were intelligent; they were honest; they were sincere: but yet I rest not my salvation on their veracity. Their word, their oath, the whole tenor of their character in testimony of the truth of their writings, is comparatively of little importance. It will not make the infidel a believer. A believer never rests his faith on such a foundation.

How shall we know the scriptures to be of divine inspiration? Miracles accompanied their delivery. The Lord God appeared and spake. He lent his power to the creature. Effects were publicly produced, otherwise impossible. This was proof to all the witnesses. They had ground of faith in the accompanying doctrine. But miracles are past. Their report is to me dependent on the testimony of my fellows. It is credible; but not infallible. It is not the formal reason of my faith. The bible is its own witness. It exhibits its divinity to my understanding and my heart, by its light, and by its power. The system of prophecy, and particularly the book of Revelation, is one continued miracle. It increases in clearness as the day progresses. It gathers strength from the revolutions of empires, and the flight of time. It shows Jehovah in the midst of his empire, planning, predicting, and accomplishing. Every age adds new events to the records, and each additional event is a new witness to the Christian religion. While we subscribe then, to the doctrine, that the "Spirit of God bearing witness by and with the scriptures in the heart of man, is alone able fully to persuade it that they are the very word of God,"* the scripture predictions, in connexion with their accomplishment, furnish an argument which it is impossible to understand and to dispute.

3. The Apocalyptical prophecy supplies additional proof to the doctrine of the Divine providence and decrees.

* Larger Catechism.

God's decree and providence may be justly considered together. The doctrine of both is supported by the same argument, and opposed by the same persons with the same objections. It cannot be consistently affirmed that he works without a plan, or that his plan will remain unexecuted. Whatever he brings to pass, he therefore must have determined to bring to pass; and whatever he willed, that will he perform. So far as his providence extends, his decree extends, and no further. The scriptures assert that this extent is to all things. The universe is under his government, from the fall of a sparrow to the whole result of the final judgment. This doctrine is expressed in one sentence by the apostle Paul, who was not ashamed to own himself a Predestinarian. Eph. i. 11. "Being PREDESTINATED according to the PURPOSE of him who worketh ALL THINGS after the COUNSEL OF HIS OWN WILL."

Upon this principle, the doctrine of prophecy proceeds; and were consistency to be expected from men, we must conclude that no man would ever believe in prophecy without being a Predestinarian.

From prophecy it is abundantly evident that God *foretold* some events as infallibly certain. They must have therefore been *foreseen* as certain. In order to be foreseen as certain, the event must have been *infallibly fixed.* It must have been rendered thus fixed by an *adequate cause,* coeternal with the divine foreknowledge. This cause must have been *divine;* for no creature then existed. The divine cause however of the certain futurition of events cannot be better named than by calling it the pur-

pose of God,—the counsel of his will,—the divine decree.

I admit that this proves only that some events are decreed. This however is enough to justify against every objection the whole doctrine of God's sovereignty. These objections, lie in all their force, against any event whatever being brought about according to the decree and by the providence of God.

All objections to the doctrine are resolved into these two, "It is inconsistent with human liberty."—"It is inconsistent with God's righteousness." But it is no more inconsistent in one case than in another. He who can secure, without destroying moral agency, or doing unrighteousness, the complete fulfilment of *any one* of his own predictions, can certainly accomplish upon the same principles *all* his purposes—*can work all things after the counsel of his own will.* The fulfilment of prophecy manifests that, in many instances, this is in fact the case; and of course proves that there is no valid objection against the doctrine.

Why then deceive yourselves, ye professors of the Christian faith, who deny the divine decrees? why deceive yourselves by doubtful reasonings against this doctrine. You plan, you contrive, you employ your influence, so extensively, so far into futurity, as is in your power. Can you at the same time be reluctant in granting, to your God and Saviour, the right of settling throughout his empire what he shall do with the works of his hands? Will you not trust his equity without setting limits to his plans? Can you not maintain human liberty but at the expense of placing the Almighty under restraints, as if he

could not govern man without destroying his rational nature? Examine, I beseech you, the scheme of prophecy. There you will be able to see the event certain; the decree unalterably fixed; the providence of God extending to every thing; man still a free agent, acting voluntarily, and in all cases, both accountable for his conduct, and also overruled for accomplishing the divine purpose. You will see all this, not as disputed theory, but as matter of fact. You will rejoice that the universe is under such government, and will say, *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

4. The book of Revelation is useful, in furnishing a continual warning to Christians to separate themselves from all antichristian connexions.

It exhibits the grand apostacy of the Roman empire in all its horrors. It points out its unceasing hostility, to the mediatorial empire of our Saviour, during the remarkable period of twelve hundred and sixty years, so often specified in this book. It proclaims in language too plain to be misunderstood, the tyranny, the hypocrisy, and the persecuting spirit of the nations and the churches—of the beast, and of the false prophet. It warns the saints of their danger; points out their condition and their duty; and demands from them a faithful testimony against the prevailing corruptions. "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

Such is the language, my brethren, of this prophecy to you. It calls upon you to have no communion with the unfruitful works of darkness. It exhorts you not to embark your affections, your hopes, or your peace of mind in the cause of any part of the antichristian policy. It invites you to repose, in confidence of the divine protection, under the shadow of his wings. It assures you that it is both happy and safe to know and to do the will of your heavenly Father, as expressed in the Apocalypse. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein. For the time is at hand."

AN OUTLINE

OF THE

CONTENTS OF THE APOCALYPSE.

LECTURE II.

Rev. i. 19....*Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.*

THIS commandment was addressed by Jesus Christ to the apostle John, called in the title of the book, JOHN THE DIVINE. The name Θεολογος, the Theologian or Divine, was bestowed upon him by the Fathers in a peculiar sense, because HE, more than any other of the inspired writers of the New Testament, discussed the sublime mysteries of Christian Theology, and particularly asserted and enforced the doctrine of Christ's divinity. Of him too it was said, "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Unto him were granted the visions which are written in this book. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ was signified unto his servant John, who bare record of all things that he saw.**

* Verses 1, 2.

This venerable man, who had lived in habits of the nearest intimacy with his Saviour; had witnessed his private friendships and devotions; had leaned on his bosom at the last supper; and who had stood by his cross while he suffered death for our redemption; now remained alone, the last of the apostles, to instruct by inspiration the rising churches. Far advanced in years, with the fervour of youthful zeal, mellowed by the experience of age, he cherished for the numerous believers of the first century, the feelings of an affectionate parent. His distinguished usefulness provoked from the enemies of Christianity a malevolence which neither his mildness of manners, nor his hoary hairs could disarm. John was persecuted.

Domitian, the Roman emperor, the degenerate son of the amiable Vespasian, was a man of ambition and blood. He succeeded to the Purple at the death of his brother Titus, and surpassed, if possible, Nero himself, in baseness and cruelty. By his orders, a war of extermination was waged against the Christians, and the apostle John after a series of other sufferings, was banished into *the Isle which* was then *called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.** This took place in the fifteenth year of the reign of Domitian, A. D. 95. being the 90th year of the apostle's age, and 62 years after the crucifixion of our Saviour.

Patmos, since called Patino or Palmosa, lies upon the coast of Asia, not far from the Island of Sa-

* Verse 9.

mos, in that arm of the Mediterranean which stretches to the northward, between Europe and Asia, and bears the name of the Archipelago, or Ægean Sea. This island is one of the most barren spots that can well be imagined: even at the present day, notwithstanding the industry of the Caloyer monks, who attempt its cultivation, and have consecrated its rocks to superstition. It was then a desert. Here the persecutor hoped that the exile would die of famine. He was, however, disappointed.

The same God who supported Moses and Elijah for many weeks together without food, revealed himself to the beloved disciple; and, by his power, supported his body, while by the Revelation made to him, his solitude was sweetened, and his seclusion from society made a distinguished blessing to the church of Christ.

In the early ages of the church there was no dispute about the authenticity of the book of Revelation, nor any one to deny that the apostle John was the writer. When, however, in process of time, the question of the millennium became a subject of violent controversy, the Apocalypse itself was attacked. The millenarians rested their doctrine upon the 20th chapter of this book; and their antagonists, in pursuit of victory more than truth, denied the canonical authority of a work which seemed to lend its aid to what they deemed a dangerous hypothesis. The objections thus raised were handed down to succeeding ages. Unsanctified literature takes pride in collecting and repeating them.

The argument for rejecting from the canon the book of Revelation, is stated in full force by the learned Michaelis, in the very elaborate work, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, and is convincingly refuted by Mr. Woodhouse, in his Introduction to a *New Translation of the Apocalypse*. It is a remark very frequently and very justly already made, that no part of the sacred volume is less dependent upon historical testimony than this book. Its own prophecies, fulfilled and fulfilling, proclaim its divine origin. It is nevertheless true, that the external evidence of its authenticity is various, clear, and conclusive.

The testimony of IRENÆUS would be decisive in a court of justice. He was a man of intelligence and veracity. His opportunity of knowing the truth upon this subject cannot be disputed. He was born soon after the date of the Apocalypse. He was by birth a Greek, and brought up under the ministry of the celebrated POLYCARP, who was cotemporary with the apostle John, and actually settled in Smyrna, one of those Asian churches to which an epistle is addressed in the book of Revelation. Irenæus removed from Asia, and was settled in Lyons, the second city of France for commerce and opulence. He maintained after his removal a constant correspondence with the Asiatic churches. In his own character he was confessedly learned, prudent, and pious. He made the Apocalypse his particular study, comparing, the several manuscript copies of it, and appealing in case of disputed passages, to the testimony of apostolical men.

Irenæus in many instances ascribes this book to "*John the evangelist, the disciple of the Lord; that John who leaned on his Lord's breast at the last supper;*" and expressly says of the Revelation, "*it was not seen a long time ago, but almost in our own age, toward the end of Domitian's reign.*"*

This witness is supported by many others,† yea, Polycarp himself, an auditor of the apostle John, and a minister of the church of Smyrna, begins the solemn prayer which he uttered at the stake, when about to seal by martyrdom the testimony which he held, with the words of Rev. xi. 17. Κυριε, ὁ Θεος, ὁ παντοκρατωρ. I offer no apology for prolonging thus far the introduction of my discourse. It appeared to me necessary to say so much about the writer of the Apocalypse, previously to laying before you

AN OUTLINE OF ITS CONTENTS.

The general arrangement of its several parts is laid down in the command of our Lord, which is now the subject of discussion.—*Write the* THINGS WHICH THOU HAST SEEN, *and the* THINGS WHICH ARE, *and the* THINGS WHICH SHALL BE HEREAFTER.

Correct method is important in every pursuit. Science cannot exist without it. A few facts on any subject under consideration, regularly classified, furnish more real information than thousands assembled

* Iren. lib. iv. 350. † See Woodhouse's Introduction, &c.

without order, and without discrimination. This principle, so well attested by the several branches of natural and moral science, ought not to be neglected by the expositor of the Apocalyptical visions. Here, method is necessary to prevent confusion, to ascertain events, and to understand the mysteries of this book.

Several excellent Commentators infer from the words of my text a *threefold* division of the general contents of this book. According to this arrangement, "the things which thou hast seen," ἃ εἶδες, are limited to the contents of this chapter, from the 12th to the 17th verse, and constitute PART I. of the whole book. PART II. embraces "the things which are," ἃ εἰσι, the present condition of seven churches of Asia Minor, addressed and described in the second and third chapters. PART III. by far the largest, respects "the things which shall be," ἃ μελλει γινεσθαι, including the remaining part of the book from the fourth chapter to the end.

This arrangement appears to me perfectly correct. I have attended to all that Lord Napier, Dr. Johnston, Mr. Woodhouse, and several other learned men, have offered in behalf of a *twofold* division, without being convinced of its propriety. I readily acknowledge that the original text will admit their translation—"Write the things which thou seest, *even* the things which are, and the things which are about to be;" but it does not require it; and the standard version is in this instance more congenial with the context. The apostle had already, under

the influence of inspiration, seen things worthy of being recorded. Descriptive addresses to several churches then existing, were about to be delivered to him, and both these, as well as the predictions of future events, are actually written in this book. The fact is the best commentary on the precept. John did as he was commanded.

Verse 10th, He was *in the Spirit on the Lord's day*—the Christian Sabbath. Deprived of the ordinances of public worship, in which he had long taken delight; this first day of the week provided eminent communion with his Redeemer, and furnished means of improvement to the church of God, in a degree superior to any thing which might have been expected from his own sermons or exhortations, to any congregation in which he would have been labouring that day, had not the power of persecution prevailed. Thus doth God make the wrath of man to praise him.

In the concerns of life, we are limited in the reception and communication of our ideas to the exercise of our faculties through the medium of bodily organs. Therefore are we said to be *in the body*. But when the Spirit of God communicates what is independent of our own organs, and by a supernatural power supersedes the immediate exercise of our bodily senses, it may be with propriety said, we are *in the Spirit*. The vision of bliss, which the apostle Paul had in heaven, 2 Cor. xii. 3. was of such a description as that he could not positively say, whether he received it through the medium of the

natural organs of perception, or in the same manner in which disembodied spirits communicate ideas to one another; and he accordingly says, *whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth.* To be *in the Spirit,* to have *the Spirit in us,* and to be *inspired,* are terms of the same signification.*

That inspiration which the apostle had in Patmos, is chiefly of the species called vision. The Holy Spirit presented objects to his understanding, precisely as they would have been perceived, if actually addressed to his sense of sight. The visions were, however, usually accompanied with suitable explanation, and both are found in the first as well as the last part of the Apocalypse.

So soon as John was inspired, he was directed to write this book, giving an account of all his visions, verse 11. *What thou seest write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia.*

This is the general command. Under it the Apocalypse was written, and copies were transmitted to the several churches. Ὁ βλεπεις, γραψον, write whatsoever thou seest—all the visions of inspiration. Whatsoever is revealed to thee, write. The command to write is repeated verse 19, and the ὁ βλεπεις, the whole contents of the Apocalypse divided into three parts. The first part, "what thou hast seen"—ἃ ειδες, is of course limited to that which is contained between this and the former command. It is that part of the visions of this book which had been already vouchsafed to the inspired writer.

* Matt. xxii. 43. Ezek. ii. 2. Rev. iv. 2. Johnston in loco.

PART I.

The vision of the Son of Man, the Candlesticks, and the Stars.

This general division is very short. It is contained in the first chapter, from the 12th to the 17th verse. It is, however, a very interesting vision, and happily introductory to each of the other general divisions of the Apocalypse. While it displays in a remarkable manner the dignity of Christ's person, and the extent of his authority over things visible and invisible, it furnishes an application of symbolical language eminently useful in illustrating the succeeding prophecies. "I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."

In this striking representation, the Redeemer of the church appears exalted above all creatures; God-man, preserving and sanctifying his churches, supporting and directing the angels or ministers, and promoting the glory of the Godhead by secu-

ring our salvation. The scenery is borrowed, partly, from the system of the universe, as in the mention of sun and stars; and partly, from the Old Testament temple service, wherein the high priest and the golden candlesticks prefigured Messiah, and the several churches. The phraseology, and the application of it, coincide with the predictions of Daniel, chap. x. The churches and ministers are said to be seven in number, because it was intended to make a special communication of the Apocalypse to seven particular churches; and because also *seven* is a symbol of completeness, both among Jews and Gentiles; and, in this sense, repeatedly employed in the work which we are considering.*

PART II.

Description of the actual condition of the Seven Churches.

This part of the Apocalypse embraces the second and third chapters. It is longer than the first, but it is short compared with the third part. The first part served not only to give a general and happy view of the Mediator, in connexion with his church and her ministers universally, but also to show the particular interest which he had in each community, as exemplified in the case of seven adjacent cities in Asia Minor. This part, by describing the reli-

* The number SEVEN, as a symbol, will be more largely explained hereafter.

gious state of several well-known churches, serves to illustrate the general principle of Christ's superintendency, as well as to show in all ages the things in ecclesiastical bodies, of which he approves or disapproves. An actual description, moreover, of these churches which are here addressed, served in the first instance, both to procure a ready reception for this inspired book, and also to confirm the faith of the primitive Christians, in a work which portrayed with so much fidelity and accuracy the state of religion in the cities to which it referred. Thus, by a declaration of general principles in the first place, and by a delineation of existing facts in the second, the way is prepared for entering upon that prospective history, which in the third place, constitutes the principal part of the Apocalypse.

The seven epistles, now under consideration, are accordingly to be viewed as history. They are of course, at present, as interesting as ever. They illustrate doctrine, they inculcate obedience, now, as well as in the first or second century. The character in them described, and the treatment due to it, from the moral Governor of the universe, will always be profitable subjects of investigation. In this point of view, therefore, these epistles may be said to have a prospective reference. *The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done.* To the churches of America, of Africa, and of Europe, as well as those of Asia, they will be applicable, so far as their character corresponds with that which is given in this book. I am not, however, capable of perceiving any advantage to be derived from giving to this

part of the Apocalypse the title of prophecies. It is, to say the least of it, straining a point without an adequate object.

There have not been wanting commentators who class these seven epistles among the predictions of future events. Such interpreters represent each of the Asiatic churches mentioned in the Revelation, not as an ecclesiastical body, then in fact existing; but as a symbol, either of a particular era of the christian world, or of some great section of the Church of God. With the aid of a little fancy, and some ingenuity, of which learned men are always fond, the descriptions of the second and third chapters are converted into so many allegories, and are applied accordingly either to seven great periods in the progress of christianity, or to seven grand divisions of christendom. I have heard, upon this principle, the church of Philadelphia represented, by one learned friend, as the type of the Millennium, and by another, profoundly versed in allegory, as the type of the present state of religion in the United States of America.

This mode of interpretation is liable to many objections.

1. Upon this principle it would be impossible to determine, what, in scripture, is history, and what, parable or allegory. There is no toleration except in cases of necessity, for deviating from the literal and obvious meaning.

2. There were, when the Apocalypse was written, situate in the Lesser Asia, seven christian churches,

in cities of the names set down in this book; and there is no intimation in the book itself, that these were not the communities intended to be addressed.

3. There is nothing in the whole contents of these epistles to forbid a literal interpretation of them, as applicable to the actual churches of Asia.

4. The text of this discourse certainly distinguishes THE THINGS THAT ARE, from THE THINGS WHICH SHALL BE hereafter—the description of present condition, from the prediction of future events. But there is no *history* left, if we include the seven epistles among the *prophecies*. By comparing chap. i. 19. with chap. iv. 1. it will readily appear that the *prophetical* part of the Revelation does not commence until the fourth chapter. Therefore, these seven epistles are narrative.

5. There is no key whatever for dividing time into seven distinct periods, bearing any resemblance to these epistles. They cannot be made to apply to the seven * periods into which the prophetic part is divided. History indeed affords such a variety of views of different ages, that ingenuity can devise some periods resembling the Asian churches. But each prophecy has a key of its own, and we are not to indulge fancy in accommodating history to prediction. No such key is found in the second and third chapters.

* That the prophetic period is seven-fold will afterwards appear.

PART III.

Visions of Futurity.

This part of the Apocalypse commences with the fourth chapter, as is distinctly announced by a voice from heaven, accompanied, too, with an immediate influence of the divine Spirit. *After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the Spirit.* From these words it is obvious, that the general division, "the things which shall be hereafter," is not only justified, but also distinctly stated to begin with the vision, narrated chap. iv. and v.

It is to this part that I design to turn, in a more particular manner, your attention. It contains an outline of history from the apostolical age to the end of the world.

The several prophecies were revealed to the apostle John in FOURTEEN separate VISIONS. These were successively vouchsafed to him with all the necessary means of understanding them, and of faithfully narrating them for our instruction.* *Three* of these visions relate to the condition of the church among the nations of the earth generally, and to

* Johnston.

the opposition made from various quarters against true religion. *One* of them respects the millennium, and *one* the state of future glory. *Nine* are employed in describing that most perplexing and distressing period, which has usually been known in the church by the designation Antichristian.

These visions do not exactly pursue a chronological order. There is indeed a general respect to the progress of time; but, in order to show the connexion of events, it was deemed necessary to attend to the chain of cause and effect, until each great subject of discussion should be fully brought into view. The prophecy, after this, returns to the consideration of other important subjects, which may have been either cotemporary with the former, or even prior to it in the order of time.

It appears to me, that to follow these visions in the order in which they stand, and so to unfold their meaning, would be an excellent method of explaining the prophecies of the Apocalypse. Such an arrangement would combine simplicity and novelty, with a more formal developement of the peculiar imagery of the Apocalyptical style than any other method of discussion. So far as I know, such an arrangement has not been adopted by any commentator. The order of the several chapters, and the chronological order, have most frequently been pursued by commentators, except in those instances in which dissertations have been given upon the several special subjects which appeared to an author most interesting.

The chain of connexion, however, laid down in the Revelation itself, *the history of the public interests of true religion in the Roman Empire*, is the one which I have determined to follow. It connects the predictions of the Old Testament prophets, particularly those of Daniel, respecting the latter days, with the prospective history given in this book. It binds together in one continuous whole, extending through a long succession of ages, the leading events of the christian world; and it preserves the chronological arrangement sufficiently distinct for all useful purposes. It affords the best opportunity of developing the great moral principles of social order among the children of men with precision, perspicuity, and comprehension. It forms the best Index for the study of all authentic history. And it furnishes to men of extended views, and liberal sentiment, the most abundant motives for pursuing in the present age a general course of policy, characterised by magnanimity, intelligence, and integrity. It, accordingly, by holding up, in a steady and clear light, suitable examples, both for warning and for imitation, tends, in a remarkable degree, to correct the practice of accommodation and shuffling, by which, the several actors upon the great theatre of the ecclesiastical world attempt to render the pursuits of religion subordinate to personal ease, or elevation, or avarice.

The principle which is always obvious, and which gives unity to the whole of the prophetic declarations is, THE CONNEXION BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, AND SOCIAL ORDER IN THE HUMAN FAMILY.

This grand principle, interesting in the highest degree to every Philanthropist, worthy of the most minute attention of the christian divine and the philosophic civilian, is selected by the prophet Daniel, and after his exhibition of it, is more largely illustrated, in its various bearings upon the actual state of the nations of the earth, in the predictions of the book of Revelation.

The prophet Daniel takes it up from that time in which the forms of social order, divinely prescribed for the nation of the Hebrews, were destroyed by the Chaldean conqueror, and illustrates its history during a long period, principally of trial and pain, until the time of the millennium. During the whole of this long period, consisting of about two thousand five hundred years from the subjugation of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, the prophet exhibits the church of God in a state of depression; and the character of the kingdoms of this world, hostile to the moral principles which Jehovah commands the sons of men to observe in their collective as well as in their individual capacity.

The triumphs of unrighteousness over religion and morality, and over the peace, the persons, and the rights of men, especially of religious men, are depicted in the page of inspiration with a pencil as bold as it is correct. The governments of the earth are, so far as they have any proximity to the church of the Most High, represented by him who best knows their character, as both irreligious and oppressive. Of these, four great successive systems are described in the second and seventh chapters of Daniel,

as, in turn, obtaining universal empire, and together occupying the whole time. A *wild beast*, Θηριον, is the fit symbol of their character. It is the symbol of immorality, impiety, and oppression. A wild beast is ungovernable, and prone to destroy. These empires are disobedient to God, and destructive to man. They appear in the following order.

BEAST, is the prophetical symbol of an IMMORAL TYRANNICAL POWER.*

Daniel's Four Beasts are the great Universal Empires, as follow.

	YEARS
1. The Chaldean empire, from the capture of Jerusalem to that of Babylon,	50
2. Medo-Persian,	208
3. Grecian,	266
4. The Roman empire under its various forms, from the time Pompey reduced Jerusalem until the close of the seventh vial,†	1930
	2454

* In this all Commentators are agreed. Θηριον, *Wild Beast*, ought to be carefully distinguished from Ζωον, *Living Being*, Chap. iv. The former word is by the Greek writers peculiarly applied to venomous animals. Parkhurst thinks the Greek θηρ may be derived from היער to divide or TEAR. Vossius derives it from the Heb. פרא to run wild, a wild ass, whence also the Latin *ferics*, *feror*, and the English FEROCIOUS. In Acts xxviii. 4. it denotes a Viper. The apostle Paul, quoting the Poet Epimenides, Tit. i. 12. applies the word to the inhabitants of Crete. And Suicer, in his Thesaurus, shows that it is usual with the Greek and Roman writers to apply such

† Calmet's Dictionary, Supplement on the word *prophecy*.

Before the Revelation was given to John the Divine, the fourth beast of Daniel, or the Roman empire, had obtained full power. The prophecies of this book of course respect the general principle, viz. *The connexion between the Christian religion, and social order*, chiefly, as it refers to the Roman power, and to the state of the church within the bounds of that astonishing empire. This consideration is an index to the several visions. It must not be forgotten by the expositor of prophecy. By far the greatest part of the Apocalypse relates to this object. The SEALS, and the TRUMPETS, and the VIALS, constitute the great chain which connects all the prophecies into a regular system in explanation of the principle stated above. And all these have respect to the Roman empire. They afford an enlarged history of the fourth beast, and its opposition to the christian church.

The order which I am to follow in these lectures is now sketched out. I shall begin the exposition of the Apocalyptical predictions with a view of the sealed book, and proceed to an interpretation of the seven seals. I shall then explain the seven trumpets. I shall afterwards go on to the consideration of the seven vials. These three periods, which precede in the history of christianity, the commencement of the millennium occupy the whole of this book, from the beginning of the fourth to the twentieth chapter.

epithets to *cruel* and *unreasonable* men. Josephus calls *Herod* Θηρίον, φονικον θηριον, a *wild beast*, a *murderous wild beast*. Civil power, opposed to religion, is unreasonable and wicked. God instructs us to esteem such rulers as wild beasts.

I shall however close this lecture with a summary account of the contents of the book of Revelation, given at one view.

PART I. Is an introductory vision of the Lord Jesus Christ in his mediatorial character, "Head over all things to his body the church."

PART II. Is a series of letters addressed to seven churches mentioned by name—of letters which unfold the religious condition, and explain the duty of these several churches.

PART III. Is prophetical. It gives a history of Christ's kingdom, explaining the maxims of religion in application to social institutions among men. It carries forward, and, at greater length, illustrates the predictions of other prophets, especially Daniel, as they relate to the fourth universal empire, or Roman power. And its whole contents are subdivided into seven distinct periods.

The seven distinct periods of the Apocalyptical prophecy are the following, viz.

1. The period of the seals.

It respects the history of the Pagan Roman empire, as it is connected with the progress of the christian religion.

2. The period of the trumpets.

It respects the history of the empire after christianity became in name, but not in spirit and in truth, the established religion; with a view of the manner in which the events of the period affected the actual church of God.

3. The period of the vials.

It represents the decline and fall of the Antichristian empire.

4. The period of the millennium.

Then nations shall not only cease to be immoral and tyrannical, but all social institutions shall be sanctified, and all ecclesiastical and civil affairs be rendered conformable to the word of God in spirit and design.

5. The period of subsequent deterioration—of Gog and Magog.

6. The period of the final judgment.

7. The period of celestial glory.

"This order of the prophecies," said the very judicious Lowman, "is, I think, intelligible and natural; and I believe, more agreeable to the important facts in history than other systems. It is certain such a plan will well answer the useful designs of prophecy in general—to prepare the church to

expect opposition and sufferings in this present world; to support good men under all their trials of faith and patience; to give encouragement to perseverance in the true religion, whatever dangers may attend it; to assure the attention of providence, and the protection of God to his own cause; that no opposition shall finally prevail against it: that the judgments of God shall punish the enemies of true religion: that their opposition to truth and righteousness shall surely end in their own destruction; when the faithful perseverance of true christians shall be crowned with a glorious state of immortal life and happiness."

Let us, my brethren, endeavour to secure for ourselves an interest in that religion which will certainly enable us to support with fidelity toward God, the profession of our faith, and also after the toils of this life are ended, to pass into the place of perfect holiness and happiness. AMEN.

THE SEALED BOOK.

LECTURE III.

Rev. v. 1—9....*And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals, &c. &c.*

WITH the sealed book the prophetical part of the Revelation commences. All that is before this is description or narrative. It is in chap. 4th, the writer is himself introduced to those scenes which are predictive. Verses 1, 2. AFTER THIS, *I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said,* COME UP HITHER, AND I WILL SHOW THEE THINGS WHICH MUST BE HEREAFTER. *And immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.* Chap. v. 1. *And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals.* Verse 4 .*And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open, and to read the book.*

From this representation it is not only perfectly obvious, that the first invitation which the apostle John received to survey futurity, is in the first verse of the fourth chapter; but it is also apparent, that

after his attention is fixed upon the object to which it was invited, all future events are still shut up from his anxious eye. The entire prophetic period is a sealed book which no creature can disclose. It is in the fifth chapter we are first introduced to the Mediator in the character of the revealer of what is to come to pass in relation to his church on earth; and it is not until the sixth chapter, that the seals are in fact broken up, and the prospective history commences. It is therefore obvious, that there is less of judgment than of fancy in the attempt of Dr. More, to discover in the second and third chapters a complete history of future churches, and in the efforts of Dr. Johnston, to make the four living creatures of the fourth and fifth chapters, prophetical symbols. By such interpretations, there is indeed afforded an ample opportunity to display fertility of genius. Fiction always affords more scope to inventive power, than does actual history. It is no less injurious, nevertheless, to the true interpretation of the Apocalypse, to force a predictive sense on passages which are merely descriptive, than it is to expound as referring to the present or the past, those in which future events are indeed unfolded. To allegorize plain language, and to construe metaphor literally, are alike incompatible with sound criticism.

With these observations I proceed to lay before you the several parts of this lecture.

I shall explain the *scenery employed in bringing the sealed book to view—show what is signified by opening this book—and make some concluding reflections.*

It will be readily admitted by all men, that a correct knowledge of those events which are yet to come to pass, so far as it exceeds the province of human sagacity, must depend upon information communicated by him who knows the end from the beginning. The writer of the book of Revelation is, therefore, careful to explain the manner in which he became the depository of those secrets of the Almighty. This explanation is given in the introduction to the sealed book. I shall now lay it before you.

I. Let us examine the scenery employed in bringing to view the sealed book.

The divine revelation made to John was of that kind which is called VISION. It is a representation made to the mind by supernatural power, having precisely the same effect that external objects have, when, in a clear light, they are distinctly presented to the eye. No sooner had he heard the invitation, "Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter," than he was the subject of inspiration. He was prepared of course to contemplate what "eye had not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived"—*Immediately I was in the Spirit.* What he then beheld is,

THE FIRST PROPHETIC VISION.

It invites your attention, Christians, not so much from the variety, the boldness, and the splendour of

its imagery, as from the interesting and important doctrines which it inculcates and unfolds. It exhibits the throne of God in heaven, as he sitteth on it —the characters that compose his retinue—and the Redeemer of men, honoured of God and worshipped by every creature.

1. *Behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.*] This scene has an allusion to the temple of Jerusalem; the place of the divine presence among his people. There he dwelt in the *splendour*, or *Shekinah*,* above the mercy-seat.

He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone.] It is not necessary that he be named. His throne proclaims the Governor of the universe. Although there is no similitude of him, his appearance is in glory. The jasper is a bright transparent stone. The sardine is like flame—a ruby. The former signifies the holiness of the Lord, and the

* SHEKINAH, is very often mentioned in the Jewish writings, and signifies in their Targums or Paraphrases, the divine presence, or the Holy Ghost. The Shekinah is that extraordinary luminous body which by miracle rested over the mercy-seat, and between the cherubim. It was the most sensible token of the divine presence among the Hebrews. It was familiarly called "the GLORY OF THE LORD"—The presence of the Lord.

In the infancy of society, and before revealed truth was diffused by writings, God assured his people of his presence by such a sensible manifestation. Thus he appeared to Adam when banished the garden of Eden, and to Abel and the patriarchs when he accepted their sacrifices. Thus he appeared to the Hebrews in the famous pillar, alternately opaque and luminous. Thus he appeared in the burning bush, on Mount Sinai, in the tabernacle, and in the temple.

latter his justice. Honour and majesty are before him, strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

And there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.] The rainbow is the well-known sign of God's covenant, Gen. ix. 13. It represents the promise and the oath of the covenant of grace, and so adorns the head of Christ Jesus.* Here it surrounds the throne of God, to show that it is a throne of grace as well as righteousness. The bow, too, partakes of the verdant hue of the green emerald, in token of the relief which it gives to the eye from the splendour of divine justice, and to show that the covenant of grace ever abides the NEW covenant. There is no *access* to the throne but by covenant. There is nothing proceeds *from* the throne but through this covenant. All the divine dispensations are subservient to it; and it is the bond of our communion with God.

Out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings.] The mercy of God does not impair his justice, and diminish his power. He is a consuming fire. Thus he appeared from Mount Sinai to the trembling Hebrews. Even Moses did fear and quake. God is glorious in holiness, and fearful in praises.

And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.] Seven lamps appertained to the golden candlestick which was before the most holy place. They pointed out

* Hab. iii. 9. Rev. x. 1.

the light of divine truth, together with all the other gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, in the church of God. Seven is a number of perfection, and thus applied to the Holy Spirit, chap. i. 4. The lamps of the candlestick are the influences of the Spirit in the churches; compare chap. i. 4. with verse 20.

Before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal.] The brazen sea of Solomon's temple was the type of that washing which removes the guilt of sin, and cleanses man from its pollution. The like figure, even baptism, appears in the system of New Testament ordinances.*

This representation of the throne is, with some appropriate variations, similar to what the prophets were accustomed to give, for the purpose of impressing the mind with reverence for the divinity, and faith in his blessed word, Isa. vi. 1—3. Ezek. chap. i. and x. Dan. vii. 9.

And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book.] Before we inquire what this book symbolizes, let us consider

* *The brazen or molten Sea*, in the temple, was about fifty feet in circumference, and nearly nine feet deep. It was filled with pure water. The priests washed themselves in this Sea, when they were about to offer sacrifices; and, in water drawn from it, into the several lavers, they washed the sacrifices to be presented on the altar of burnt-offerings. This represented the purifying influence of the blood of Christ, necessary for both the priests and the sacrifices. The sea of glass before the throne, represents the same object—The atonement by which we are justified, and the consequent sanctification, by which we are fitted for the fellowship of the saints in light.

2. The retinue of the King.

The attendants are of three classes, chap. v. 11. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many *angels* round about the throne, and the *beasts*, and the ELDERS. We shall attend to each in the order of approximation to the throne of God—Faithful ministers, saints, and angels.

The faithful ministers of the gospel of Christ are symbolized by the four living creatures, Τεσσαρα Ζωα.

The word Ζωα is very improperly translated *beasts* in this passage. I do not know an instance in which the translation degrades the original idea more than in this. The Greek word signifies any thing that has life, and may, indeed, in its highest use be applied to him who hath life in himself. Both Plato and Aristotle apply it to God.* We render it in this case living creatures.

Several excellent critics have represented these "living creatures" as angels, and Woodhouse has employed great pains to prove that they are the highest order of angels, because, 1, their description is borrowed from the seraphim of Isa. vi. and the cherubim of the temple, Ezek. i. 10. and, 2, because they are placed in Rev. iv. 6. nearest to him that sitteth upon the throne. The first argument is, however, inconclusive; and the second proves entirely the reverse of what it is employed to prove. That some of the attributes of angels should be ascribed to Christian ministers, is nothing uncommon,

* Woodhouse in loco.

for they are even called by the name of angels in chap. i, ii, and iii. That they are placed near to God, yea, nearer than angels are, is evident from chap. iv. 6. and v. 11. and is perfectly conclusive that they are distinct from angels. Redeemed men being united by the Spirit of God to Jesus Christ, are thus made one with God in him, John xvii. 21. They must, therefore, although originally made lower than the angels, become nearer to their God than these sons of the morning. There is another consideration, however, that puts the question at rest. They are made to sing, chap. v. 9. a song, which in the mouth of any but redeemed men, would be a falsehood. *Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth.* They are, in fact, throughout their whole description, perfectly distinguished from the angels.

They are evidently, too, a distinct order of redeemed and saved sinners. Their employment, as well as their situation and character, point them out as the faithful ambassadors of the cross of Christ. At the opening of the seals, chap. vi. they call to the churches, *Come and see.* In other words, they are the watchmen who expound the prophecy, and teach to men their duty. They are placed between other saints and the throne, being the official attendants upon their Lord and Saviour. They are described as full of eyes to mark their discernment; and compared to the lion, to the ox, to man, and to the eagle, to denote their courage, their patience,

their humanity, and their celerity, elevation of mind, and quick-sightedness in the service of God.

This description is not intended to apply so much to each or any individual pastor in the christian church, as to the collective body. They are said to be in number four. This number is often used to signify universality. The *four winds* of heaven,* are all winds. The *four corners* † of the land, are the whole country. Dr. Johnston says, this "number denotes four successive periods from the days of the apostles to the final judgment." He imagines the first, *lion*, symbolizes the primitive ministry—the second, *calf*, or *young ox*, the ministry of the dark ages—the third, *man*, the ministry of the reformation—the fourth, *eagle*, that of the millennium. It is however a mere assumption that the four living creatures are symbolical of any distinct periods, and especially of the four which are here specified. This interpretation gives an exposition of one of the most interesting concerns of futurity even before the sealed book is at all opened. And each of the twenty-four elders might with as much propriety be separated from his companions, and made the symbol of a prophetical period, as separate the four living creatures, who appear, not one at a time, but all together, at the throne of God.

A consideration however arises from the sixth chapter which completely destroys this fanciful interpre-

* Dan. vii. 2. and xi. 4. Rev. vii. 1.

† Isa. xi. 12. Ezek. vii. 2. See *Philo* and *Pythagoras*, as quoted by *Woodhouse*.

tation. Each of the four living creatures appears actually engaged in one period, and that a very early one. They all act, each in his turn, at the opening of the first four seals.

By "the four living creatures," I therefore, throughout understand, the collective body of faithful ministers, in every given period of the christian church. Next in order, appear before the Lord the King, the collective body of faithful people. They are symbolized by the twenty-four elders.

The Πρεσβυτεροι, *elders*, were well known as the representatives of the people of Israel, and as the constitutional representatives of christian congregations. By the number twenty-four, being that of the twelve tribes added to that of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, the Old Testament and the New Testament churches appear united in one representative assembly. Being made kings and priests unto God, they are seated before the throne.

There is in this part of the vision an undoubted reference to the manner in which the Jewish Sanhedrim sat before their president. The throne itself is the segment of a small circle, so that the four living creatures being within the segment, and before the Lord, might be said as in chap. iv. 6. to be in the midst of the throne, and round about it. The twenty-four elders were upon seats round about the throne, in a semicircle of larger dimensions. They are also all clothed in white raiment, the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and they are crowned with the crown of righteousness. They and the living creatures sing the new song, chap. v. 9. In a com-

plete circle, embracing both the throne and the semicircle before it on which the elders sat, were arranged the third class of characters who composed the splendid retinue—the holy angels.

I beheld many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the elders.] They are ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. They are about the throne, but *at greater distance than redeemed men.*

3. This vision presents to our view the Redeemer himself, before the throne of God, receiving the homage of created beings.

The Messiah was not revealed until there was evidently a necessity for his interposition. In no case do we either look for him, or desire to acknowledge him, until we feel an absolute necessity for an interest in him.

I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book—And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, who is worthy to open the book—and I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book—And one of the elders saith unto me, weep not: behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book. Under these very interesting circumstances, when anxiety is at its height, the blessed Redeemer appears in his mediatorial character, and inspires the assembly with joy. *And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a* LAMB AS IT HAD BEEN SLAIN—*And* HE CAME AND TOOK THE BOOK *out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne.* The ministers of his word,

the church which he redeemed, the unbodied spirits, in countless myriads around them, and the whole creation rejoice at the appearance of him who is both the *lion* and the *lamb*, to take the book, and to loose its seals. The living creatures and the elders celebrate the praises of their own Redeemer. Other intelligences join in celebrating the praises of the Redeemer of men. No sooner had the Lord Jesus Christ taken the sealed book, than

> "The multitude of angels, with a shout
> Loud as from numbers without number, sweet
> As from blessed voices uttering joy; heaven rung
> With jubilee, and loud hosannas filled
> The eternal regions—
> No voice exempt, no voice but well could join
> Melodious part—such concord is in heaven."*

II. We shall now attend more immediately to the sealed book itself, to the opening of which, all this was introductory.

The book which appeared in the right hand of God, and was given to Messiah, contained the outline of those events which were after that time to come to pass.

A book is any thing upon which ideas are committed to writing for the purpose of being read. Various sorts of materials were anciently used in making them. The works of Hesiod were written on plates of lead. The laws of Solon were written on wood; and the divine law was written in Sinai on tables of stone. From the use of the inner bark of trees in this way, books derive their Latin name *Li-*

* Milton.

ber; and as the substance written upon, whether bark or *papyrus*, or parchment, which came afterwards into use, was frequently rolled up for the sake of convenience, books were called volumes, *volumen*, or rolls as in scripture, Ezek. ii. 9. When a writing was thus rolled up, the contents could not be read, and when secrecy or security were intended, the rolls were sealed.*

In the book before us are the purposes of heaven recorded. They are known to himself before they are accomplished, and they are arranged in due order. These purposes are, however, SEALED. They are certainly to be executed, and they are effectually concealed from view until they are either displayed in the event, or supernaturally made known to man. In this instance, the roll is sealed with SEVEN seals. SEVEN was among the Jews a sacred number, and is the sign of completeness. "This number," says Calmet, "is consecrated, as it were, in the holy books, and in the religion of the Jews, by a great number of events and mysterious circumstances. God created the world in seven days, and consecrated the seventh to repose. Every seventh year was also consecrated to the rest of the earth as a Sabbatical; also the seven times seventh year as the Jubilee. In the prophetic style, a week, i. e. seven days, often signifies seven years. Pharaoh's mysterious dream represented to his imagination seven fat and seven lean oxen: seven full ears of corn, and seven empty. The number of seven days is observed in the oc-

* Calmet.

taves of the great solemnities; of the passover; of the feast of tabernacles; the dedication of the tabernacle and temple. Observe also the seven branches of the golden candlestick; the number of seven sacrifices often appointed. In the Revelation—the seven churches; seven candlesticks; seven spirits; seven stars; seven lamps; seven seals; seven angels; seven trumpets; seven vials; &c. In a word, we may find the number seven throughout the scripture." In the present use of the number seven, it is quite certain that the idea of perfection is involved. The book was completely sealed; and its contents are not to be revealed but by breaking open the several seals, and so unfolding the volume. There is besides an evident reference in this passage to the writings of the earlier prophets. They represented, as a sealed book, predictions which were not understood. Isa. xxix. 11, 12. *The* VISION *of all is become unto you as the words of a* BOOK THAT IS SEALED, *which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I cannot; for it is* SEALED. The words of the Lord respecting what was about to come to pass after the commencement of the christian era, are more immediately applicable to the sealed book now under consideration. Daniel xii. 9. This prophet had heard the Messiah speaking of the great period of twelve hundred and sixty years,* so often the subject of discussion in the Apocalypse, and frequently before suggested to Daniel himself, but he

* Time, times, and a half—three years and a half—forty-two months, &c.

understood it not. *And I heard but understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel, for* THE WORDS ARE CLOSED UP AND SEALED *to the time of the end.*

The book closed up against the inquiries of Daniel, and sealed to the time of the end, is that which now appears to John in the hands of him that sat on the throne. The prophet was in vain desirous to know its contents; and the apostle equally anxious, wept because there was none found worthy to open the book. But John the Divine wiped away his tears, and joined the general hymn of praise heard among the celestial inhabitants, when the Lion of the tribe of Judah appeared and took the book in his hand, with design to unfold its contents. It was understood by all, as well as of old it had been by the prophet, that it contained the prospective history of the Mediator's kingdom. Therefore were they so anxious to learn what that history should be. A similar anxiety is natural to all liberal and faithful christians.

THE SEALED BOOK,

Now about to be opened by him who is the Root of David, and the Lamb of God, is therefore to be considered as a prophetic view of the future interests of religion, as they do affect, and are affected by the great social concerns of the human family. The opening of the book, by disclosing its contents, is of course the information which by divine revelation is

afforded to us upon this very interesting and important subject.

It is necessary in order to prepare you for the interpretation of the subsequent prophecies of the Apocalypse, that this principle be well understood and kept in recollection. I shall therefore more formally assign my reasons for considering the sealed book as containing the whole of that period of time, the events of which are predicted in the Revelation.

1. The whole history of the church of God on earth, from the commencement of the gospel dispensation, until the general judgment, is included in the sealed book of the prophet Daniel, and must of course, except so far as it was already disclosed by the events, be contained in the book which John beheld in God's right hand. His purposes are one, and the books in which they are recorded evidently identify. Dan. xii. 4. *O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, even to the time of the end.* These words, however, extended to the period verse 2, in which they *that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*

2. The words of the Saviour, "the first voice," that addressed the writer of the Apocalypse,* gives assurance that such a general history would be given—*I will show thee the things which must be hereafter.*

* Compare chap. iv. 1. with chap. i. 10, 11.

3. This book appears sealed in the hand of God. It is the *purpose* of the Almighty respecting his church. All the inhabitants of the upper sanctuary are anxious to know the contents. None but Messiah can be found worthy to unloose the seals. To him the book is delivered in the most solemn manner. Now, as all the purposes of God are administered by Jesus Christ, and thus committed to him to be administered, the book must include the whole scheme of the divine government.

4. Under the seventh seal is included the whole period of the trumpets. Chap. viii. 1, 2. *And when he had opened the seventh seal, I saw the seven angels which stood before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.* The seventh trumpet, however, includes the whole of future time; and therefore it must have been originally in the sealed book. Chap. xi. 15—18. *And the seventh angel sounded—And thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged.*

It is indeed the general, if not the uniform mode of the divine Spirit, to give in every entire prophecy, at the close of those predictions which exhibit great sufferings to christians separately, or the church of God collectively, a view of that REST which remains for the faithful, *where the wicked cease to trouble.* The prophecy of the book of Revelation places at the conclusion of it, the general resurrection and judgment; and thus carries on the history contained in the sealed book to the end of all time, when *other books* behove to be opened for settling the final state of all flesh. Chap. xx. 12—15. "And I

saw the dead small and great stand before God: and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works—And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire: this is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire."

The whole period of the Apocalyptical prophecy belongs of course to the sealed book. The seven periods already designated are included in it; although the most interesting parts are more fully described in collateral visions. The LITTLE OPEN BOOK of chap. x. is in the text itself, as will appear in due time, sufficiently distinguished from this GREAT BOOK: but it is to be observed, that the period which it particularly describes, is a very interesting part of the general one which is set forth in the roll originally held in the right hand of him who sat on the throne.

"It is a very erroneous opinion, that the predictions of the Revelation, and accordingly the contents of the sealed book, point out a very short space of time—a few years after the vision. The wisdom and goodness of God, which provides in every state of affliction suitable support to the faith and constancy of the church, give us reason to believe that the spirit of prophecy did not design its holy aid exclusively for the first ages of christianity."* Every section of the Apocalypse which is selected

* Lowman.

as the subject of lecture, will, however, afford us the best opportunity of determining the points of time to which itself applies. We deem it necessary at present, only to add to the preceding considerations that the true church has found, during the long and gloomy reign of superstition over the nations called christian, great support and consolation from the Apocalyptical predictions, both such as were fulfilling in their own day, and such as are even yet unaccomplished. Dr. Clarke has justly observed, "God did from the beginning make, and has all along continued to his church, or true worshippers, a promise that truth and virtue shall finally prevail over the spirit of error and wickedness, of delusion and disobedience."* The opening of the sealed book being a disclosure of those events which stand connected with the sufferings and the sorrows, the victories and the triumphs, of the church, was remarkably adapted to the condition of believers during the ages which were destined to precede the millennium. It is perfectly becoming, therefore, that the opening of this book be accompanied with the shouts of both the ministers and members of the christian church. *And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof.*

A long written roll, fastened with seven separate seals, cannot be entirely disclosed until the last seal is removed; and it would be improper to suppose, that each seal would, when opened, exhibit an equal portion of the contents of the roll. Upon such an instrument, seals could not in fact be placed in such

* Connexion of Prophecy.

a manner as to be visible, and at the same time affect each an equal portion of its contents. Each of the six first opened, could only disclose comparatively a small part; whereas the last must unavoidably unfold the entire book. We are accordingly prepared, from the nature of the symbol, to expect that the period of time which the six seals describe is comparatively short. The opening of the seventh seal immediately announces the angels of the trumpets, and both they and the angels who hold the vials will be found to have executed their commission before the reign of righteousness extends over the earth. The seals, the trumpets, and the vials, therefore, give names in the systems of the best Commentators on prophecy, to three great distinct periods, from the apostolical age to the time of the millennium. The period of the seals is the first in order, and includes all the events predicted during the opening of the first six seals of the great book. This shall be the subject of the succeeding lecture.

III. I conclude this discourse with two reflections.

1. The vision respecting the sealed book excites joyful anticipations of discoveries elucidating the predictions of the elder prophets, and especially those which were uttered by Daniel to the Jewish captives in Babylon. Daniel himself was deeply and anxiously affected by what he saw and heard. John the Divine, and the company which he beheld in the temple, were deeply affected by what *they* saw and heard. You too, my brethren, if you drink together into the same spirit with these celebrated

and godly men, will take a deep interest in the discoveries made to you by the Revelation of Jesus Christ. You will receive them with suitable emotions.

It is not the love of the marvellous,—that principle so natural to all men, but to which the weakest minds are the most prone; it is not the love of the marvellous that we would now court or invite to action. It is not the idle curiosity, which makes a man of no discernment or benevolence seek to know and to repeat what others do not know, merely for the gratification of vanity; and which is of course more enamoured of novelty than of truth; which is satisfied with the semblance of truth; this is not the principle which we would invite to the examination of divine predictions. We use no efforts to awaken the spirit of discontent at the order of God's providence as it respects your present lot; or of selfish calculations of future temporal emolument, without regard to the interest of true religion. We would rather consign such a spirit to perpetual sleep. But we do invite you, christians, beloved and redeemed of the Lord, to employ your faculties in the diligent acquisition of that knowledge of futurity which the God whom you worship hath deemed of importance supernaturally to lay before you. It is the spirit of love, of zeal, and of a sound mind, that we would enlist in this holy service. It is that benevolent sensibility, which disregarding the perilous and perishing enjoyments of this world, weeps with the afflicted Israelites, and rejoices at the prospect of deliverance to the whole seed of Jacob, that we

would cherish and improve. It is that holy, that rational desire of knowing what God is about to do, and in what manner he calls for your co-operation, in promoting the glory of his great name, in dispensing happiness around him, and in saving your own souls—It is this laudable desire of information we would cultivate among you.

The vision of the sealed book introduces you to your compatriots—to men of a kindred spirit. The pastors of the church, and the *four and twenty elders having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints,* invite you to their fellowship. The throne of light appears surrounded with the token of the covenant of grace. God is in the midst of it. The Lion of the tribe of Judah from the throne administers his providence in the support of his ransomed inheritance. His voice is heard by believers, saying, *Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.* I have delivered to you the invitation. Will you authorize me to express your acceptance?—to testify to my God the zeal of his people, and their affection for his cause? I pause for a reply. Yes! I shall offer in your behalf the vow which is demanded. *For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.*

2. The subject under consideration calls upon you, before you retire, to express your satisfaction in the exaltation of Jesus Christ.

"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and honour, and glory, and blessing." This is the song of angels and redeemed men. We have a right to require, and to expect of you that you join in his praises. It is through him alone you have access to the throne of grace. It is in him alone you are living members of the church. There is no other name by which you must be saved.

Upon the nature of our relation to Jesus Christ depends entirely our christian character. When that relation is a vital spiritual union, we are justified. "Being dead to the law by the body of Christ, we are married to another husband." His righteousness is upon us, and his Spirit within us. We are true christians. When that relation is constituted by a sound profession of faith in his doctrine, we are professed christians. But if the profession be insincere, we are hypocrites; and if there be no more than a profession, we are no more than nominal christians. Let us test our sincerity by the doctrine of Christ's exaltation. It is a mode of trial which he himself taught his disciples to employ. *If ye loved me, ye would rejoice because I said, I go to the Father.* The only possible ground of reluctance to have all power in heaven and on earth administered by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is indisposition to obey some or all of his commandments. This indisposition he himself ascribes to the want of love for him. *If ye love me keep my commandments.* Inasmuch then as it is impossible to love the Redeemer without a corresponding love for his law, so it is equally im-

possible to love him or his laws, without being disposed at the same time to have him as our ruler, and without an ardent desire to see the whole concerns of men regulated by christian principles.

I think I might with safety lodge my appeal, against the doctrine which limits the mediatorial authority, with the hearts of renewed men. What say you? Is it unpleasant to you, that your own Saviour should be the King of nations and of saints? Is it desirable that his authority be under restraint? I know your reply. Left to his own unbiassed feelings, and to the word of God, no true christian would ever wish to see the Redeemer's power shortened. *Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.* There would be weeping in heaven if Christ were prevented from reigning. Now there is universal joy because he discloses, both by prediction and providential accomplishment, the decrees of God. "I wept much," said the apostle, "because none was found worthy to open and to read the book. And one of the elders saith unto me, weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof."

This arrangement gave universal satisfaction. "He came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb—And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof."

It deserves to be distinctly remarked, that those ministers and members in the celestial church, were far from imagining that his character and sufferings as Mediator rendered him less qualified for reigning, or less worthy of religious worship: for in the midst of their adoration, they pointed out the official character in which they viewed him when they sung his praise, and assigned as a special reason for their song, his sufferings for our redemption. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

What are we then to think of the religious character of those who refuse to ascribe divine honours and religious worship to Jehovah-Jesus? Are they indeed christians, who reject the doctrine of satisfaction for sin by the death of Christ; who exhibit his sufferings as not in fact the price of our redemption; and who degrade him to the condition of a mere man?

The christian religion is something more than saying, I am a christian. Be not deceived, God is not mocked. Does a man say, "I am a scholar?" The assertion does not make him one. Does he say, "I am a merchant, a land-holder, a soldier, a philosopher?" His assertion does not make him so. And shall his own assertion entitle a man to be considered as a christian, who gives no evidence of a sanctified spirit; who despises the doctrines of the grace of God; and who proclaims him-

self a mere partizan of man? This is not an imaginary case. Hundreds claim the christian name who adopt such language as this, "I have no need of a Redeemer to satisfy divine justice for my sins. There is no Mediator necessary to establish reconciliation. Jesus Christ is no more than a creature. He is a mere man. I am a christian only because I believe Jesus Christ to have been a man of talents and virtue, at the head of a certain sect." Can you suppose that such a profession makes a true christian? Then is christianity in nothing essentially different from the religion of the outcast Jew, of the Heathen, and of the Mahometan. And such christians, like the Jews of old, upon the supposition that our Saviour gave himself out as equal with God, would adjudge him guilty of blasphemy, and worthy of death. At the most, they could say no better of him than Pontius Pilate when giving him up to the executioner—"In this just man I find no fault."

You, my dear hearers, have not so learned Christ. You know He *thought it not robbery to be equal with God.* You readily bow before him in acts of humble adoration, without feeling the guilt of idolatry. You see that angels also have received the command to worship him. He is "the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last—God over all, blessed for ever." Hear, what this first Apocalyptical prophecy says of him, when he took the sealed book. All creatures adore him. All give him honour equal to that which they give unto God the Father. Every heart beats high with exultation, and every tongue is employed in eulogy. *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to re-*

ceive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that is in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said Amen. And all true christians will imitate their example. Amen and Amen!

THE PERIOD OF THE SEALS.

LECTURE IV.

Rev. vi....*And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four living creatures, saying, Come and see, &c. &c.*

IN this chapter, we have a complete specimen of the symbolical style of prophecy. This kind of writing contains in a small compass much information: but like the hieroglyphics of antiquity, or historical painting, it requires skill and accuracy in the application of each part to its corresponding event. Whensoever a diversity of exposition is admissible, with respect to the same or similar symbols, it must, like every other species of figurative language, be determined by the connexion. Due attention to this is necessary in order to prevent confusion in the interpretation.

In the schedule which I have already laid before you, of the contents of the sealed book,* I mentioned the general division of the events between the

* Page 68.

apostolical age and the millennium, into three distinguished periods—the period of the *seals*—the period of the *trumpets*—and the period of the *vials*. We are in this lecture to examine

PERIOD I.

It is that part of "the book sealed with seven seals," which is disclosed at the opening of the six seals, first in order. At the breaking of each seal, a portion of the roll or volume is unfolded, and the writing becomes legible.

Before I proceed to examine the contents of each seal, it will not be amiss to attend to those considerations, by which, in connexion with the prophecy itself, we are enabled to ascertain the period of history to which the seals refer. From these it will appear, that there is no undeterminateness in the Apocalyptical predictions, and that in our interpretation of them, respect is had to certain fixed principles, without giving any scope to fancy or implicitly submitting to human opinions, however respectable.

There is indeed ample evidence that this period embraces the events which came to pass in the Roman empire, under its Pagan rulers, from the days of the apostles, until the revolution which invested Constantine, called the Great, with the imperial purple. Of this evidence, every person may judge for himself.

1. The "sealed book" of the Revelation has immediate respect to the Roman empire.

The power of that government was now universally established over the nations in which the christian church existed. The christians were deeply interested in its policy. They felt severely under its persecuting edicts. They were moreover directed by the prophecy of Daniel to consider it as the last empire that should appear under the influence of Satan to oppose the establishment of Christ's kingdom. The vision of Nebuchadnezzar interpreted by the prophet, chap. ii. was, at least thus far, well understood. The "head of gold" had passed away with the Chaldean monarchy. Verse 38. *Thou art this head of gold.* The breast and arms of silver had been destroyed with the Persian empire which succeeded that of Babylon. Verse 39. *And* AFTER THEE *shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee.* The kingdom established under Alexander of Macedon, had also fallen never to rise. Verse. 39. *The kingdom of brass bearing rule over all the earth.* The "fourth empire" is the one which existed at the time of John the Divine. Verse 40. *The fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron, and as iron shall it be broken in pieces.* It was expected according to this prophecy that the Roman government should undergo such convulsions as should divide it into ten distinct powers, still however united in opposition to the authority of Jesus Christ, and the church of God. Verse 41. *And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter's clay, and part of iron; the kingdom shall be divided.* It was understood too, that when Rome should undergo such change, the interests of religion, after having suffered great depression,

should become paramount, and the kingdom of Christ be established. Verse 44. *In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed.* A still more specific account of these same four great empires is given in Daniel, chap. vii. under the character of beasts of prey. Verse 17. *These great beasts which are four, are four kings.* The fourth of these had ten horns, indicating the tenfold division already mentioned. Verse 24. *And the ten horns out of this kingdom,* (the *fourth* kingdom, verse 23.) *are ten kings that shall arise.* This power under a new form, "the little horn," prevailed for a time, and times, and the dividing of time, until true religion triumphed—Verse 22. *Until the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.*

These predictions presented the power of Rome, in such a light, as could not fail to make men of liberal information look upon its history with great anxiety. From prophecy, they had a right to expect consistency and order; and, of course, that the Roman empire should not be overlooked in the system of predictions relative to the public social concerns of the christian religion. And as the sealed book of Daniel xii. 4. was opened in the presence of John by our Lord Jesus Christ, it is reasonable to infer that it had some respect to imperial Rome—the kingdom of iron—the fourth great wild beast.

2. As the Roman empire cannot be overlooked in this prophecy, it is equally evident that the view which is given of it must commence from the apostolical age.

From history it now appears that three great and distinct successive characters have been assumed in this empire, since the christian era. It long existed under the system of heathen superstition—It continued for some time under its imperial form, professing the christian religion—It has now for ages, in its divided state, existed in the maintenance of the Papal system. These three terms correspond with the three periods preceding the millennium—the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Vials. The seals are the first in order, and of course belong to the first great period.

3. The design of prophecy furnishes, for the attentive, a key to each great part of the system.

This design we have already explained at large. I now only call to your recollection, that to furnish believers with ample means of hope and of faithfulness in the midst of their troubles, enters into that design. The system of prophecy describes in its course the perils and the pains of the saints; but it closes with a view of their triumphs. Each great period of prophecy will, upon attentive examination, be found to answer this design. It conducts us on a part of our journey, and after the toils of the day, brings us to a place of refreshment and rest. In exhibiting the state of the church, and of the Roman empire, during the conflicts of christianity with idolatry, it might be expected that the period would close with the overthrow of Paganism by the judgments of Zion's mighty King.

4. Inspection of the prophecy itself furnishes conclusive evidence, that the period of the seals is the time between the reign of Domitian and that of Constantine.

Prediction certainly respects futurity, and on no principle of sound criticism are we justified in applying the Apocalyptical seals to past events. The promise made to the apostle is, chap. iv. 1. *I will show thee things which must be hereafter.* This consideration precludes our adopting the opinions of those who explain the seals, or any one of them, as signifying what had already come to pass. The sixth seal, as appears from the text, and will be explained in the sequel of this discourse, describes a very remarkable revolution. The terms employed cannot be applied to any event prior to the era of Constantine; and that time perfectly suits the description.

I am aware that several respectable writers have of late denied that any advantage was obtained by the church in that revolution. If this were indeed the case, it could not have been represented as a time of triumph to the saints. But on this subject there is great need of discrimination. If we follow the path of scripture prediction, we will not be found at variance with history.

Whatever may have been the moral character or religious standing of Constantine himself, and we are not disposed to rate them highly, the events of his reign were undoubtedly judgments from God upon that great Pagan power that long annoyed the saints. If he also, either injudiciously or perverse-

ly intermeddled unduly with ecclesiastical concerns; still, the actual church, real christians, found in his authority and plans, a shelter from their Heathen persecutors. Nor were persons of this description so much affected, by the pernicious system of state religion which he introduced, as were the more ambitious and worldly-minded ecclesiastics, who took an interest in the pompous hierarchy to which he yielded his countenance. While the higher orders of prelatical pride, those creatures of human contrivance, among whom true religion rarely flourishes, were deeply engaged in the political management which respected the more worldly part of the professors of Christianity; the meek followers of the Lamb of God, had cause to rejoice in the restraint which was laid upon their avowed enemies. In this point of view, the revolution was a signal blessing. Nevertheless, the "fourth kingdom" still retained its BEASTLY character—The Roman empire remained "the kingdom of iron." The government of the empire, and the order of the more conspicuous parts of the church, were by no means accordant with the *principles* of christianity.

As the "sealed book" commences with the time which succeeded John's banishment to Patmos, and the sixth seal terminates in the revolution which overturned Pagan Rome, the opening of the six seals must of course disclose the leading events of that PERIOD, including from 97 to 323, TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SIX YEARS.

Although we have already proved the propriety of applying the predictions of the six seals to the

Roman empire, as it existed before the age of Constantine, it still remains to inquire, whether these predictions respect its civil or ecclesiastical history. Jurieu, and bishop Newton, explain all the seals as descriptive of the administration of the imperial government; Lord Napier, and Mr. Woodhouse, esteem it improper to apply this prophecy to any other than ecclesiastical events. Mede, Lowman, and Johnston, apply the seals to both civil and ecclesiastical events; and they appear to me to be nearest the truth. Political changes are, in *themselves*, beneath the notice of prophecy; and the changes of ecclesiastical systems are often *mere political commotions*. There is little difference between the transactions of statesmen and those of churchmen, as to their morality, or as it respects the virtue of the public agents. Both may be under the influence of pious principles, and both have often been actuated by selfishness and malevolence. Too generally has it been the case throughout the Roman empire, and the several kingdoms of the earth, that there was no true religion in the hands of either the rulers of the church, or those of the commonwealth. The difference, as to actual moral worth, between Caiaphas and Pontius Pilate, or even between Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, and his royal master Charles I. is no cause of controversy. But although there is in fact, no religion in the transactions of such civilians and ecclesiastics, true religion is frequently very deeply affected by the events which they are the instruments of bringing to pass. On this account, the divine prescience has been employed about both,

and both have a place in the system of sacred prediction. The object of the Apocalypse is to illustrate THOSE GREAT MORAL PRINCIPLES WHICH AFFECT THE PUBLIC INTERESTS OF TRUE RELIGION, and in doing this, it employs the events of civil history, as well as those which are considered ecclesiastical. The six seals are of course intended to disclose those events within the specified time, which, whether appertaining to civil or ecclesiastical history, are of most importance to be understood by the friends of real religion in the world. We shall proceed to

THE INTERPRETATION

Of each of the six seals in order as they were opened by our Saviour. He alone reveals and dispenses what has been determined upon in the certain secret purposes of God.

SEAL I.....Verses 1, 2. *And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four living creatures, saying, Come, and see. And I saw, and, behold a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer.*

The apostle, attentively beholding the Saviour, and desirous of learning the character of the age, observed that when he opened the first seal, a part of the written roll was unfolded. In order to persuade us to mark with becoming attention each dispensation of divine providence, and to point out the

duty of the ministers of Christ in every age, in explaining the signs of the times, one of "the living creatures" in a voice of thunder said, *Come and see.* It was the first of the living creatures that gave this invitation. Like a lion he communicated his commands in a voice of authority, bold, strong, and solemn. "Come, behold the works of the Lord,"* is a precept which faithful pastors are accustomed to deliver.

In obedience to the mandate, John looked, and saw on the opened leaf, the representation of a monarch riding forth to conquest.

Behold, a white horse.] This animal, noted for his comeliness, speed, strength, and fitness for the service of man, is the symbol of the instruments God employs in the dispensations of his providence to accomplish his purpose. White is the emblem of purity. It is pleasant to the sight: and it symbolizes a dispensation of purity and mercy.

He that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given to him: and he went forth conquering and to conquer.] Bishop Newton, who seems to have been entirely destitute of an evangelical taste, and consequently sees as much purity and splendour in a heathen warrior as in the dispensation of the grace of God, applies this remarkable passage to the emperors Vespasian and Titus.† They were both numbered with the victims of the king of terrors, however, before the sealed book was opened. The

* Psalm xlvi. 8.

† The bishop adopted this interpretation from Jurieu.

prophecy, therefore, could have no reference to them any more than to Augustus or Romulus. In order to avoid this objection, others have applied the prediction to the reign of Trajan. While we admit that this celebrated emperor possessed admirable talents for government, and was very successful in war, the character of his administration by no means comported with the symbol of the first seal. To christians he was a scourge. Under him persecution prevailed. He often conquered, it is true; but not on a "white horse," and it is far from being true, that he is hereafter *to conquer*. He, too, has ceased to reign.

The symbol, in short, can apply only to the triumphs of the "WORD OF GOD." I have not met with any plausible objection to this interpretation, save what arises from the date of the prediction. But although the gospel dispensation commenced several years before this vision, it was still progressive. The prophecy does not respect its commencement; but its progress, and its future triumphs. This was the most desirable object which could possibly be presented to John the Divine, or to the church of God. And it is evidently a matter of fact, whether in this place predicted or not, that christianity was then progressive, and afterwards to proceed with greater power. The symbol cannot consistently be explained in a different sense. The sacred language forbids any other signification. Psalm xlv. 3—5. "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty; with thy glory and thy majesty. And in

thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness. Thine arrows are sharp in the hearts of the King's enemies; the people fall under thee." Compare these words with the text, and they will certainly appear to apply to the same character.

The first seal, therefore, exhibits to the pious mind the Mediator *riding prosperously* upon the dispensation of the gospel of his grace,—*the white horse, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness.* He held in his Almighty hand the weapons of spiritual warfare, *a bow*, with *arrows sharp in the heart of his enemies. A crown was given to him, of glory and majesty; conquering and to conquer, the people fall under him.* He is by divine appointment the governor of the universe. He rules in his saints; he rules over his enemies. A succession of conquests shall prepare the way for his final triumphs. Psalm cxxxii. 18. "His enemies will I clothe with shame; but upon himself shall his crown flourish."

If these considerations could leave any doubt upon the mind, as to the interpretation now given, it would be completely removed by a portion of this book, which employs this very symbol in a connexion which admits not of an application to any Vespasian, or Trajan, or indeed any mere man, or company of men. Rev. xix. 11. "Behold, *a white horse; and he that sat on him was called faithful and true—And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and his name is called* THE WORD OF GOD—*And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should*

smite the nations—And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." This last vision, under the seventh vial, completes the conquests which were in progress in the first vision, at the opening of the first seal. Such is the commencement and termination of this prophecy.

SEAL II. Verses 3, 4. *And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red; and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.*

Cheered with the prospect afforded to him of the progress of the gospel, and of its future triumphs, the writer of the Apocalypse is prepared to bear with becoming patience a sight of the troubles which the second seal announces. As the first "living creature,"—the lion, invited him to behold the triumphs of the cross, the second—like the calf or ox, calls his attention to the contents of that part of the roll which is now unfolded. Labour and patience, similar to those of an ox, are the becoming characteristics of the christian ministry in a period of sufferings.

And there went out another horse.] A Horse is the symbol of a DISPENSATION OF PROVIDENCE. By its means, providential causes proceed to their end. Zech. i. 8—10. *Behind him were there red horses, speckled and white. Then said I, O my Lord, what*

are these?—These are they whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth.

The heathen consecrated horses to the sun, because the sun was the object of their worship; and this deity was represented as drawn by horses. The Jews fell into a similar kind of idolatry before the reign of Josiah. 2 Kings xxiii. 11. *And he took away the horses which the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the Lord—And burnt the chariots of the sun with fire.**

Another horse that was red.] This is the colour of blood, and indicates the character of the dispensation. It was a bloody, or rather a fiery one. πυρρος comes from πυρ, fire. "The angel," says Woodhouse, "who leads the host to war among the nations, Zech. i. 8. is mounted on a horse of the same colour. This is also the colour of the dragon, the ancient serpent, the devil, who comes wrathfully to war against the saints," Rev. xii. 3, 9, 17.

And power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth.] EARTH, in common language, has a variety of significations not difficult to distinguish. The connexion always settles the proper

* The Rabbins inform us that these horses were every morning harnessed to the chariots, dedicated to the sun, and that the king or some of his officers, got up and rode to meet the sun at its rising, as far as from the eastern gate of the temple to the suburbs of Jerusalem. Others are of opinion, that they were horses which none were permitted to ride or to yoke, but were like those which Julius Cæsar set at liberty after his passage of the Rubicon. The Persians had such horses, as well as the ancient Germans. Those belonging to the Persians were streaked or pied: Those of the Germans all white. Herodian calls them Διος Ἵπποι. CALMET.

meaning. It signifies the whole terraqueous globe; the dry land, as distinguished from the sea; and clay, or soil, as distinguished from sand and rocks. In science, *earth* denotes certain brittle inodorous substances, such as lime, alumine, &c. distinguished from metals, and acids, &c. By a very common figure of speech it designates the inhabitants of the world, or of some distinct part of the world; and the scriptures very frequently connect with the word, the idea of sensuality and corrupt affections.

In this text, and in all such connexion in this prophecy, earth signifies the Roman empire. This is evidently its meaning in various parts of the New Testament; and the reason is, that it was well known that this empire was in general estimation, as well as in scriptural account, a universal empire.* Judea itself has been called the earth, Psalm xlviii. 2. considered as the place of the saints—the *religious world;* and each of the four great empires, the Chaldean, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman, have in their turn, been thus designated, as constituting in succession, in an eminent degree, the *political world.*† Daniel particularly, whose sealed prophecy is explained by the opening of the Apocalyptical seals, denominates the Roman empire, "the fourth kingdom upon the earth;"‡ and it is meet that *earth* should, on that account, be employed in the Apocalypse, as the symbol of that empire.

To take peace from the earth, is to involve the empire in war, *that they should kill one another.* And

* Luke ii. 1. † Dan. iv. 1. Ezra i. 2. Dan. viii. 5, 21.
‡ Dan. vii. 23.

for this purpose, the symbol of military commission was conferred on him that sat upon the *fiery* steed; *there was given unto him a great sword.*

"He that sits on the horse" is the one who conducts the dispensation to its proper end, and by no means the human instrument that may have been providentially employed in bringing about the event. It was not, therefore, Trajan and Adrian, the Roman emperors, as bishop Newton imagines, that conducted the destinies of the world, although they were instruments of divine vengeance. It is to the angel of the covenant, the high commission of executing judgment, was given. "I had a vision by night, Christ the angel of the covenant, represented himself to me as a man riding on a red horse—and behind him were several angels ready to attend his commands." (Bishop Hall on Zech. i. 8.) "The man, or angel, denotes the *Logos*, or Son of God, appearing as the captain of God's hosts, or armies.—They answer this man or angel as if he were their superior or commander." (Lowth.) "A *man*, one in human form, even the Son of God, who afterwards became man for our salvation; and he sat like a warrior on a red horse, as about to execute vengeance on the enemies of his people." (Scott.)

This prophecy was accomplished in the terrible wars which were waged within the bounds of the empire during the reign of Trajan and Adrian. The christians suffered, at different periods, great persecution; and the Jews and the Heathen, the common enemies of the christian faith, inflicted upon one another the judgments of the Almighty. It was emphatically a bloody dispensation. *The Heathen*

raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted—Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth.

SEAL III. Verses 5, 6. *And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, Come, and see. And I beheld, and lo, a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures say, a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.*

The third living creature, who now invites us to a contemplation of the symbol exposed to view on that part of the roll which was unfolded by breaking the third seal, is said, Rev. iv. 7. to have the face of a man. Correct reasoning, and humane feeling, are indicated by this symbol. They are at all times ornamental to the character of the christian ministry, but especially in a time of sensible afflictions. To sympathize with the poor, and reason with the pious, in order to convince them of the justness and the kindness of the divine dispensations, is the duty of a pastor to his distressed flock.

The black horse.] Is the representative of famine. Lam. v. 10. "Our skin was black like an oven, because of the terrible famine." The other symbols lead to the same idea.

He that sat on him had a pair of balances.] ζυγος from ζευγω to join, literally signifies that which joins together. It is generally rendered yoke. After all the learning, however, employed by Mr. Woodhouse, in his endeavours to fasten that meaning upon

it in this text, we think the translators have acted correctly in rendering it a scale, or pair of balances. "In this sense it is applied not only by profane writers, but frequently by the authors of the *Septuagint*, for the Hebrew מאזנים a pair of scales."* This sense better suits the context. It exhibits the necessaries of life as very scarce. Ezek. iv. 16. "Behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem; and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment."

A measure of wheat for a penny.] Both Grotius and Vitringa have remarked, that the measure of wheat, Χοινιξ, was a man's daily allowance; and that a penny, Δηναριος, was the daily wages of a common labourer. The design of this expression, is therefore to show, that although there is not a universal want of bread; there is a great scarcity among the lower ranks of life. Honest industry cannot secure a competency. A labouring man may earn his own bread; but cannot provide for his wife and children.†

Of the luxuries of life, *the oil and the wine*, there is no scarcity. The affluent do not feel the famine of

* Parkhurst.

† Χοινιξ σιτου δηναριου. The *Chœnix* is allowed to be about a pint and a half; and the Roman *Denarius* about fourteen cents. As there are 32 quarts, or 128 half-pints in a bushel, the *Chœnix* is not quite one-fortieth part of a bushel. Allow it, however, to be the fortieth part, and at fourteen cents, the price of the bushel will be $5 60. This price, when the wages of a day-labourer was so low as fourteen cents indicates great famine. Dabuz shows from ancient authorities that in time of plenty twenty *Chœnixes* were sold for a *Denarius*. The scarcity must be great when the price of wheat is raised twenty to one; and other bread-corn is in proportion.

the land. But as the great body of the christians, and probably too the most humble and faithful, are found among the industrious, the middle ranks of life, if not among the poor, such a dispensation will by them be painfully felt.

Such is, in fact, the picture which history gives of the times succeeding the reign of Adrian. From the year 138, when the Antonine family were raised to the Imperial throne, until the time of Severus, there was great suffering for want of provisions throughout the Roman empire. Of this the christians were previously admonished.

SEAL IV. Verses 7, 8. *And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, Come, and see. And I looked, and behold, a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was death; and hell followed with him: and power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the field.*

An eagle-eyed, spiritually-minded ministry, invites us to this scene of wo. It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting. The sword and the famine are now followed by the pestilence—*A pale horse.* Pallidum mortem dicunt poetæ. (Grotius.)

In this dispensation of holy providence, the king of terrors appears; and *hell followed with him.* Our Saviour, nevertheless, still conducts the destroying angel whithersoever he will. *Before* HIM *went the pestilence, for* HE *has the keys of hell and death.* At the command of the Mediator, the agents employed

execute their task. Death triumphs, and Hades is satiated with her prey. The sword is continued; the famine still destroys the life of man; the beasts of prey, the persecutors, are not yet effectually restrained; but the most remarkable characteristic of the age is pestilence—the pale livid-green horse.* Mr. Mede observes from Zonaras and Lipsius, "that a pestilence arising from Ethiopia, went through all the provinces of Rome, and for fifteen years together, wasted them." This judgment which destroyed about the fourth part of the population of the Roman empire, continued from 211 to 270, a period of sixty years. "Of the reign of Gallus and Volusian Eutropius gives this short character. They were memorable only for pestilence and grievous distempers. *Sola pestilentia, et morbis, atque ægritudinibus, notus eorum principatus fuit.*"†

Seal V. Verses 9—11. *And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given to every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.*

By the preceding persecutions, a vast number of christians suffered martyrdom. The enemy killed

* Χλωρος.

† Lowman.

their bodies; but had no means of killing their souls. A martyr, is a witness: and a christian martyr, is a witness who understands, who believes, and who maintains christianity at every risk. Those only, who were slain for the word of God, and the testimony which in conformity to that word they held, are in the sense of this text, reputed martyrs. However firmly and constantly men may maintain other principles than those which are sanctioned by the word of God, such men have no concern in the present prophecy.

The souls of the martyrs were under the altar, living in the enjoyment of the benefits of the great sacrifice, and of the reconciliation with God which that sacrifice secured to believers.

They still trust in the Lord, and although they suffered for his sake, they are persuaded of his holiness and truth. They accordingly appeal to his justice as the Judge of the universe, and confidently carry their cause before him of whom it is written, "vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." Their appeal is admitted, and a reply is immediately given to them. Each of them is clothed in white,—justified, and publicly recognized as justified by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ—fine linen clean and white, which is the only righteousness of the saints.

Notwithstanding the comfort afforded to the pious mind at the opening of the first seal, the scenes of distress and horror which appeared under the three following seals, were such as to appal the stoutest heart. It is not easy to ascertain or to describe the

number of actual persecutions under Pagan Rome. Some of these persecutions were provincial, and others were universal. The power of Rome, claimed the right of deciding upon the religion of its subjects, and from this principle, as impious as it is cruel, flowed both toleration and persecution. The principle was reduced to practice, as the tyrannical policy of the fourth beast dictated. The religions of the conquered provinces were tolerated as often as it suited this policy. The several kinds of idolatry having little hostility to each other, because all flowed from the same fountain of falsehood, were perfectly capable of intermixture; and thus the gods of the subjugated nations were recognized at Rome, and admitted to the Pantheon. It was far otherwise with the doctrine of salvation by a divine Mediator. Christianity could make no compromise with false religion. There is no communion between light and darkness. Its demands upon men are great. It requires the whole heart and life. These demands excited corresponding provocation; and in proportion as worldly policy directed, the church was either tolerated or persecuted. Primitive writers were in the habits of reckoning ten very extensive or universal persecutions. They are enumerated by Dr. Cave as follow, viz.

PERSECUTION

1, Commenced A. D. 64, under the emperor Nero
2, ... 90, ... Domitian
3, ... 107, ... Trajan

4, ...	A. D. 118, . . .	Adrian
5, ...	163, ...	Verus
6, ...	202, . . .	Severus
7, ...	235, . . .	Maximinus
8, ...	250, ...	Decius
9, ...	257, . . .	Valerian
10, ...	303, . . .	Dioclesian

These were not ALL the persecutions which took place under Pagan power. The number of provincial and universal persecutions taken together far exceeded ten; but, the universal persecutions taken separately, did not amount to that number. Those mentioned by Dr. Cave, nevertheless, whether provincial or universal, were certainly so great as to merit particular notice.

The peculiar design, however, of the *fifth seal*, is to *illustrate* doctrines of vast importance to the church.

It exhibits, in a safe state of conscious activity, the souls of christians, immediately on their separation from the body; and accordingly, sets aside the idea of the Materialists, that death affects the soul as well as the body. *I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain—and they cried with a loud voice.*

It demonstrates the principle, that beings perfect in holiness and in happiness, and consequently free from malevolence, may earnestly desire to behold just judgments executed upon the ungodly persecutors. Christians, accordingly, may consistently pray for the punishment of their enemies. *How long, O*

Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

It exhibits the principle of RETALIATION as a part of the system of God's moral government. This principle we shall illustrate more fully in our exposition of the judgment of the *third vial.* It may be sufficient in this place to quote the judicious remarks of Dr. Johnston. "It seems to be an essential part in the constitution of God's moral government of the world, that the vengeance of heaven shall follow those men, who, with malevolent hearts, imbrue their hands in the blood of their fellow-men. The voice of Abel's blood cried to God from the ground, for vengeance on the guilty head of Cain. This is the express declaration of God. Gen. ix. 5, 6. *Surely, your blood of your lives will I require—at the hand of man, at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.*

"When innocent blood is shed, not by individuals merely, but by communities of men; it seems to be peculiarly fit that vengeance should be taken on those communities in this world, in the course of divine providence, independent of that account, which every guilty individual must give for himself at the bar of God. As it is only in this world that communities exist in their collective capacity, it is in this world only that they can be punished in their public character."

Retaliation is to be exercised upon *them that dwell on the earth.* The EARTH we have already shown, is

the Roman empire. And that empire shall be overthrown.

The fifth seal shows the time when this event shall come to pass—When antichristian Rome shall have completed her persecutions. The martyrs are required to have patience until with that empire the cup of iniquity be full; and then shall the *fourth beastly power* be destroyed. Then "shall the saints possess the kingdom." *And it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.*

Seal VI. Verses 12—17. *And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind: and the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places: And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free-man, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*

It has been justly said by several able expositors that this magnificent description is borrowed from the

great day of final retribution. Then shall the Lord say to the Redeemer, his vice-gerent,

> Go then, thou mightiest, in thy Father's might;
> Ascend my chariot; guide the rapid wheels
> That shake heaven's basis; bring forth all my war,
> Pursue the sons of darkness, drive them out
> From all heaven's bounds, into the utter deep;
> There let them learn, as likes them, to despise
> God, and Messiah, his anointed King.*

Seeing also, that the scenes referred to in these verses, belong to the day of judgment, there are not wanting men who consider the sixth seal as displaying that last and awful period. This opinion is as ancient as the days of Cyprian. It is, nevertheless, founded upon very inaccurate principles of interpretation.

In the predictions of the Apocalypse, throughout, the great doctrines of the christian religion are taken for granted; and although frequently referred to and illustrated, it is not the object of this part of the sacred volume, so much to *reveal* doctrines, as predict events which were otherwise either scarcely or not at all foreknown. The doctrine of future retribution is always taken for granted in this prophecy, and is very often referred to, as affording an illustration of the several objects of the sacred prediction; but in no one instance in the Apocalypse is it the object of a prophecy to predict the day of judgment. That event is too certain, upon other principles, to stand in need of a particular prophecy

* Milton.

to assure us that it shall come. Before we can have much interest in reading or hearing the revelation made to John the divine, we must be convinced that it is appointed unto all men once to die; and after death the judgment. Every christian minister endeavours to keep this doctrine continually before his congregation; but he cannot on that account be said to *prophesy* that there shall be a day of universal retribution. Equally improper would it be to say that the sixth seal is a prophecy of the day of judgment. The imagery, employed as the symbol, belongs indeed to that day; but it is here employed to predict quite another event. This is done upon the principle that the Judge of the universe, will also judge each community, as such, in its proper time; and that all these partial judgments lead us to meditate upon, and prepare for that which is final and universal. In many places, besides the passage of scripture now under consideration, the description of the day of judgment is employed by the prophets to represent the fall and punishment of states and empires;—of Babylon, by Isa. xiii. of Egypt, by Ezek. xxx. 2—4. and xxxii. 7, 8. of Jerusalem, by Jeremiah, Joel, and by our Lord, Matt. xxiv. Assuredly, that judgment which it pleased God to inflict upon the Roman empire, in which Paganism and its persecuting supporters were overthrown, merits as magnificent a description as the fall of Egypt or Babylon.

To this event alone the prophecy, in chronological order, can with propriety be applied. In all its parts the prediction is accomplished in that great revolution which took place under Constantine, the first of the emperors who professed the christian religion.

"The great and various struggles and evils," said Dr. Johnston, "by which this revolution in the empire was brought about, began in the *three hundred and sixth* year of the christian era. This was the very year in which the events predicted under the *fourth* seal ended. The fifth seal did not take up any period of time, as must be evident from its nature, as already explained. Hence, the events predicted under this sixth seal, in course of time, must follow upon those predicted under the fourth seal."

The *earthquake*, or rather, as bishop Newton renders the word, the CONCUSSION, Μεγας Σεισμος, affected the political heavens and earth. The *sun*, the emblem of supreme Pagan imperial power, the *moon* and the *stars*, the other great departments of state, were eclipsed or hurried from their orbits. *The heavens departed as a scroll which is folded up*, the frame of government was itself altered, and rendered subordinate to the christian faith. The kings, the captains, the masters, and the slaves, who opposed the religion of the Son of God, were filled with consternation; and, in vain, sought a shelter from the wrath of the Lamb. Stripped of their honours, of their wealth, and of their power, the great were humbled in the dust, and left to perish without hope. Deprived of their protection, the idolatrous and impious servants, shared in the downfall and despair of their masters.

The principal instrument employed by a benevolent providence in executing this judgment, was admirably qualified for the undertaking. The time

had not yet arrived for sanctifying the thrones of the nations, and establishing Mount Zion in her millennial glory; but the church required a respite from persecutions.

True religion is not indeed for some time to come to extend righteousness and peace over all lands; but such an external support must be given to christianity, as shall effectually destroy the power of heathenism, and rescue from ITS OPPRESSION THE SAINTS of the Most High.*

Constantine was raised up by the Sovereign of the universe to answer this purpose. He was the son of Constantius Chlorus, who, together with Galerius, attained to the imperial dignity upon that extraordinary event, the voluntary resignation, at the same time, of the two emperors Dioclesian and Maximian. Constantius became emperor of the West, and Galerius governed the eastern regions of the empire. Constantine was in the thirty-second year of his age when his father died, and left him his successor in the imperial dignity, with his dy-

* Such was the effect of the success of Constantine. Like the revolution of 1688, effected nearer our own times, though upon a smaller scale—that which placed king William upon the British throne, and freed our brethren in that land from the desolating power of tyranny and superstition, wielded by the house of Stuart, the revolution of 325 deserves to be remembered with gratitude to God. William bore a resemblance to Constantine. He was crafty, heroic, and ambitious. He knew how to make religion serve a political turn. He afforded protection to real christians. He patronized what he saw proper to establish as the *state religion.* As to personal religion, from any thing that appears in history, he was very indifferent.

ing advice to be friendly to the christians. Galerius, Emperor over the East, reluctantly recognized the elevation of Constantine; but afterwards appointed, in opposition, Severus to the imperial dignity, and after his fall, Licinius. Maxentius, a rival claimant of the throne, had actually possessed himself of Rome the capital of the empire: and Maximin, another pretender, claiming under the title of Severus, disputed for the supremacy in the east.

Such was the distracted condition of the Roman empire when Constantine ascended to its highest office. He had to fight his way against his rivals; and he was successful. With an army principally composed of professed christians, he overthrew Maxentius at the gates of Rome; and published an edict immediately in support of the christian religion. This took place in 312, but his rivals in power continued for eleven years thereafter to oppose christianity with all their might. Maximin had indeed perished in a state of madness; but Licinius remained the sole hope of Pagan idolatry, to dispute with Constantine the empire of the world. He too fell in the year 323, and left his rival to pursue his own plans without opposition.

Christianity now became the religion of the empire. The lights of Paganism were cast to the ground. Constantine assumed the supreme power over the church; modelled it according to the forms which he introduced into the State; and in order to perpetuate his name, and the remembrance of the revolution which he effected, he translated the seat of government from the city of Seven Hills, where it

had remained upwards of one thousand years, and established it in a new city, built with the utmost splendour, which he called Constantinople. This Revolution puts an end to the PERIOD OF THE SEALS: and I, brethren, will bring the Lecture unto a speedy

CONCLUSION.

In this interpretation of the first great prophetic period, laid open by the removal of six of the seven seals from the book which was delivered to Messiah, I have endeavoured to keep constantly in your view the MORAL PRINCIPLES which the prophecy was intended to illustrate. Every Roman history will furnish you, who have leisure and inclination to pursue this subject, with ample evidence of the facts which I have asserted. Quotations might be multiplied. This is not a subject, however, about which Commentators generally are at variance. With few exceptions they support the exposition now given. You will find an ample collection of historical documents in illustration of the six seals, in Lowman and Johnston, and in Mede and Newton.

I should with pleasure have laid before you the several facts in the words of the celebrated historian of the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire;" but it would have extended beyond due bounds this Lecture. Recollecting too, that there is no need of dwelling so minutely on those matters which are not disputed, I have been anxious to pass over this PERIOD of the prophecy with all possible speed.

I trust, brethren, that you will not separate until you have unanimously resolved to treasure up the moral furnished by the history which we have been reviewing. The dispensations of Providence extend to all things; and they all have respect to the church of Christ. God our Saviour reigns. He is gone forth conquering and to conquer. And when the mystery of providence is finished, the final judgment shall be held. Then the wicked shall suffer in proportion to their guilt, and you who love the Lord Jesus Christ shall be admitted to happiness without end. AMEN.

THE APOCALYPTICAL TRUMPETS.

LECTURE V.

Rev. viii....*And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets, &c. &c.*

REVEALED religion affords the most clear and extensive views of man's origin and connexions, as well as the only satisfactory discoveries relating to God, providence, and a future state. While, from the simple exhibition of Christ crucified, is derived the peculiar efficacy of gospel preaching, in promoting a life of holiness, the faithful developement of the mysteries of Divine Providence yields powerful reinforcements. In these, the vast and comprehensive scheme of government, administered over mankind, is unfolded in its principal periods to its last result. The discussion of topics, selected from the history of God's providence as it respects human affairs, would unquestionably, if fitly managed, tend to fix our attention upon the several acts of Christ's administration; to awaken and exalt our reason; to inter-

est and to improve our conscience; and thus, both enforce obedience to the law of the Lord, and promote our own holiness, usefulness, and happiness. The dispensations of Divine Providence, like the Apocalyptic Angels in this chapter, sound their trumpets in every period for the benefit of "the men of understanding."

These Trumpets give a brief prospective history of the

SECOND PERIOD.

You have already been informed, that the *first period* extended from the apostolical age to the overthrow of Paganism, in that signal revolution which established Constantine the Great upon the throne of the empire. This is "the period of the seals:" It has respect to the Heathen Roman empire, opposing the growing influence of christianity, as the system to which the symbols appertained. Each seal contains a distinct chronological prediction. The events, of *one*, terminated before the commencement of those which are pointed out in the *other*, unless in the text itself, intimation is given that the events exhibited in vision, are only in progress. The sixth seal completed that period; and at its close the seventh seal commences. Seeing, therefore, that this seal does little more than announce the trumpets, the *second period* is called the period of the trumpets. In this lecture, I propose, To explain the preface to the trumpets—Give the rules of interpretation—and show the interpretation of the first four trumpets.

I. *Introduction to the period of the trumpets.*

This part of the prophetical history is prefaced with great solemnity. Silence reigns, and the whole assembly gives a reverential attention to what is laid before them. The High Priest of our profession offers unto God the prayers of his people, before he gives commission to the destroying angel to enter upon his work. He casts upon the earth the burning coals of the altar as the signal of his wrath. Then the angels prepare to execute his judgments, Verses 1—6.

And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.] While the priest, according to the Mosaic ritual, offered incense in the holy place of the temple in Jerusalem, the people without, in profound silence, offered their prayers.* In allusion to this fact, it is said, "there was silence in heaven," at the opening of the seventh seal.

This SILENCE remained but for a very short time—*about the space of half an hour.* It indicated nevertheless, the awful curiosity which christians in that very trying time, indulged with respect to the future concerns of the Roman empire. After the establishment of the christian religion, they enjoyed a respite from persecution—For a short time they worshipped their God in tranquillity. The rest which they enjoyed from their tribulations, in consequence of the revolution described under the sixth seal, still continues at the opening of the seventh; but it does not continue long. It is a time of silent solicitude for what is to

* Luke i. 10.

come to pass. The seven angels stand before their God, and receive from him the Trumpets, which shall speedily put an end to the silence which now reigns. In the mean time the service of God proceeds among his faithful people, and the Great High Priest intercedes for them in heaven.

And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar which was before the throne.] Jesus Christ himself is the Angel at the golden altar. He was typified by the priests of the law who worshipped in the temple. He alone adds incense to the prayers of the saints. He is the channel through which we approach Jehovah. And whether we interpret the allusion as to the day of expiation* or to the daily service, as to the high priest, or some other of the sacerdotal order, the Mediatorial angel, the High Priest of our profession, is here revealed as our Advocate with the Father. The whole house of Aaron was typical of our Redeemer. Through him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father. And the smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

* "On the day of expiation the whole service was performed by the high priest. The custom was on other days to take fire from the great altar in a silver censer; but on this day for the high priest to take fire from the great altar in a golden censer; and when he was come down from the great altar, he takes incense from one of the priests who brought it to him, and went with it to the golden altar, and while he offered the incense, the people prayed without in silence." *Sir Isaac Newton in loco.*

The Priest of the covenant of grace appears in various characters in order to accomplish the salvation of Israel. He is a King and a Priest upon his throne. He rules over his enemies. He presents to his Father the prayers of all saints, and by terrible things in righteousness, he frequently gives an answer to these prayers.

And the angel took the censer and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth, and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound.] This puts an end to the tranquillity of the "half hour." Commotion, and battles, and political changes, now supersede suspense, and attract attention. The altar, upon which was offered acceptable sacrifice, furnishes coals of fire for the destruction of impenitent men. The censer, which conveyed the incense to the sanctuary, is the instrument of torture to the guilty. The angel of mercy, who had just offered the prayers of the saints, turns around him to bring judgments upon the nations. Religion has frequently been the occasion of contention; and independently of the disputes to which it may from time to time have given rise, by the decree of a righteous God, judgment without mercy overhangs every country or people to whom the christian religion has been sent in vain. Its language to individuals and to communities is, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little."

The applicability of these remarks to the time of which the text speaks is evident from history.

The repose of the church after the accession of Constantine and the establishment of christianity was of very short duration. The state of religion itself, being greatly corrupted, contributed to the disorders of society. In an ignorant, licentious, and tumultuous age, it might have been expected that a religion which, from whatever cause, spread with great rapidity, would be embraced in its visible forms and mere name by multitudes who had no inward conviction of its power; and, that being thus professed, it would suffer degradation by the polluted touch of unprincipled men.

However insidious and impious the efforts of the celebrated historian of the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" may have been, in treating as he has done of the causes which he assigns for the progress of christianity; it is not to be denied that these causes, and even others which he has not mentioned, and which are equally unworthy of true godliness, contributed to spread *nominal christianity* among the nations. While *actual* religion was progressing by a divine influence, such causes co-operated in the establishment of *corrupt systems*, bearing the name of Jesus Christ, and having some resemblance to the gospel of God. The absolute power which Constantine himself assumed over the church, in modelling its government after the manner of the civil empire, together with the prevalence of superstition and heresies, soon produced a state of things greatly injurious to the interests of primitive truth and

order. "The Arian heresy itself introduced a succession of crimes disgraceful alike to humanity and religion."

At the opening of the seventh seal, and before the sounding of the trumpets, we are accordingly presented with a suitable emblem of the situation of affairs in the moral world.

A *silence*, expressive both of present tranquillity and awful solicitude about the prospect before them, prevailed among the christians. The worship which true believers offered unto God, was accepted through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. The abuse, and the rejection of revealed religion, called for the revelation of the righteous judgments of God; and burning coals from the altar are consequently cast down upon the earth by the Head of the church. *Voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake*—Contentions, and wars, and even a revolution in the religion of the empire, interrupt the silence some time previously to the sounding of the trumpets.

Bishop Newton extends too far the repose of the church, symbolized by the half hour's *silence in heaven.* Mede, Lowman, and Johnston, have neglected to remark that the thunder and the earthquake preceded the blowing of the first trumpet. The bishop is perfectly correct in representing the sounding of the first trumpet, as posterior to the reign of the emperor Theodosius the Great; and the other Commentators referred to are equally correct, in limiting the silence or tranquillity of the church to a much shorter period than from the time of Constantine to the

death of Theodosius. In this period, the Arian heresy produced contentions and tumults that extended from the cottage to the throne of the empire; the Goths disturbed by frequent incursions the general repose; and the apostacy of Julian,* although his reign was but of short duration, was as the shock

* Julian "the Apostate" was the son of Julius Constantius, and the nephew of Constantine the Great. He was a man of talents, learned, politic, and ambitious. War in those days, was the chief employment of man; and it was in the field of battle, and at the head of his armies, that Julian distinguished himself as the formidable rival of Constantius, the last of the sons of Constantine, with whom he disputed the empire of the world. He succeeded. Constantius died, and Julian, in the thirty-second year of his age, A. D. 361, became sole emperor.

His attachment to the Platonic philosophy is supposed to have influenced him to renounce the christian religion; and his well-known fondness for the study of magic, so unbecoming a man of genius and education, will in part account for his indisposition to the gospel. Reasons of state, however, furnish to such a man as Julian the most powerful motives of action, and must determine whether any, or what religion, shall be embraced. He was a crafty and ambitious warrior and statesman. The family of his uncle were of the christian religion, and calculated upon the support of the church which they had enriched and protected. Julian, at enmity with that family, and desirous to rise upon their ruin, put himself at the head of the Pagan interest, offering toleration to all sects of Christians. No sooner was he confirmed in the supreme power than he formed the design of extirpating christianity.

He patronized the Jews, and in hopes of convicting the New Testament of falsehood, employed his wealth in vain attempts to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple. He can scarcely be said to have completed a revolution in the religion of the empire, on account of the shortness of his reign, and the caution with which he was constrained to act. Julian reigned only two years. At his death the religion of the empire was restored.

of an earthquake to the religious establishment of the empire. Such a period cannot be represented as a season of tranquillity.

Mr. Faber has given the most correct view of this part of the prophecy. "The year 313 was marked by the famous edict of Constantine in favour of christianity: in this year therefore, the tranquillity of the church commenced. No great length of time, however, elapsed before the peace of the empire began to be broken by the incursions of the northern barbarians about the year 323. At this period I conceive the seventh seal to have been opened, and the silence of half an hour, or rather of half a season, to have commenced. The silence seems to denote the state of mute and anxious expectation in which the church anticipated the grand irruption of the Gothic monarch Alaric and his associates. The period then of the *half season* describes the affairs of the church and the empire from about the year 323 to the year 395. Upon referring to history we find, that the incursions of the northern barbarians gradually became more and more formidable. Between the years 365 and 379, an almost perpetual war was carried on between them and the Romans, with various success: and in the last of these years, when the empire seemed on the point of being completely overrun and dismembered, Gratian associated with himself in the imperial dignity the famous Theodosius. By the successful valour of this warlike prince, the sounding of the first trumpet, and the impending ruin of the empire, were delayed for sixteen years: but 'the genius of Rome expired

'with Theodosius, the last of the successors of Au-
'gustus and Constantine, who appeared in the field at
'the head of their armies, and whose authority was
'universally acknowledged throughout the whole ex-
'tent of the empire.'"*

Having occupied, brethren, so much of your time in explaining the introduction to the sounding of the trumpets, it is proper that I should, without further delay, proceed to specify the

II. *Rules to be observed in ascertaining the period, and in giving the interpretation of the Apocalyptical Trumpets.*

You will already have observed, what we have taken for granted in the preceding remarks, that the trumpets have respect to the affairs of the Roman empire under what is called its christian form. I intend, under this head, to show that this is not a mere gratuitous hypothesis. Every prophecy furnishes its own key—A key adapted with so much wisdom to the several wards of the lock, as that it alone, without offering violence to any part of the sacred mechanism, sets open the door to him who seeks admission into the sacred edifice. The preservation of consistency, in both the symbols and the chronology of scripture prediction, is essentially necessary.

1. The seventh seal, it is to be remembered, is the last on the sacred book. When *it* is broken, the whole book is of course laid open. And it is alto-

* Gibbon.

gether incongruous with the prophetical symbols to imagine, with Mr. Woodhouse and others, that this seal returns to the period of the first seal, for the purpose of giving a re-exhibition of the same chronological epoch. The seventh must be supposed to commence where the sixth terminated, and to continue the same theme of discussion until the angels are commanded to sound their trumpets. Upon this principle we have proceeded in explaining the first verses of this chapter, and we shall now justify the application of the Apocalyptical trumpets to the history of the great events which took place in the moral world, in connexion with the fate of the fourth universal empire, after the time of Constantine and Theodosius.

The last of the seven trumpets is sounded before the commencement of the Millennium. Rev. xi. 15. "And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." If the seventh trumpet precedes that illustrious period of time, so must all the trumpets; and we have shown that the seventh seal, which includes them all, succeeded the era of Constantine. The period of the trumpets must therefore be found somewhere between the time of the overthrow of Pagan Rome, and the overthrow of antichristian power, before the reign of the saints commences.

The additional argument, in support of applying the trumpets to this period, is derived from the interpretation of the prophecy; and, I must of course, leave that interpretation in due time to speak for itself.

2. It is of great importance, before we attempt to explain the figurative language of this prophecy, in order to designate the particular historical events in which it has received its accomplishment, that we distinctly understand the object in view—the definite system of events of which the predictions treat.

Although it is generally admitted by respectable commentators that the christian Roman world is the *scene* of this prophecy; there is a diversity of opinion as to the special *object*. Mr. Mede, who is followed by the greater part of modern expositors, assigns this reason for making the Roman empire the theatre upon which the predictions are accomplished. "As Daniel in the Old Testament both presignified the coming of Christ, and arranged the fortunes of the Jewish church by the succession of the empires; so the Apocalypse is to be supposed to measure the christian history by the means of the Roman empire, which was yet to be remaining after Christ." The interpretations of this eminent expositor proceed upon the principle that the empire is in fact the special object. On this account he has been censured by Mr. Woodhouse, as guilty of neglecting a more noble object, "the fates and fortune of the christian church," and as inconsistent with himself, inasmuch as he had not maintained the *homogeneity* of the trumpets. Mr. Woodhouse, himself, adopts the principle upon which Mr. Durham and Dr. Johnston proceed, that *the christian church, not the empire of Rome, is the special object:* but, in his exposition, he differs widely from both these divines; and follows, in the general outline, if not entirely in the minute details, the explanations given by Lord Napier. It was

not, however, doing justice to Mr. Joseph Mede, to represent him as inconsistent with himself, either as it respected the fifth or the seventh trumpet.* It was no part of his scheme to exclude ecclesiastical considerations from the prophetic page. A little reflection too might have convinced Mr. Woodhouse himself, that under the seventh trumpet the christian religion does in fact triumph over the immoral systems which obtained throughout the Roman empire, partly by the infliction of merited judgments upon that *beastly* power. The followers of Mr. Mede require no further vindication.

I do not, however, admit, that either the church or the state exclusively, is the system which the Apoca-

* "If the trumpets are to be all homogeneal, let us have recourse to one of them, whose character and interpretation are placed beyond dispute.

The *Seventh Trumpet*. "What does it announce? Most clearly the *victory obtained by Christ and his Church*, not over the Roman Empire, but over the powers of hell. They (the six Trumpets,) *must* therefore be supposed to contain the *warfare of the Christian Church*." *Woodhouse*, p. 222. *Lon.* 1805.

Such is the argument of this very learned writer. But surely he had forgotten that the *seventh Trumpet* itself records the downfall of the *kingdoms of this world*. It was a triumph over the Roman Empire under its antichristian form. This is the *fourth beast* of Daniel—The *fourth kingdom on earth*, in its divided form; or in other words, the beast with seven heads and ten horns: the kingdoms, in short, of the old Roman Empire, now distinct, but *united* by a bond of blasphemy and iniquity, a corrupted religion made an essential part of tyrannical policy.

Christianity cannot triumph until *political religion* be overthrown: and this kind of religion, by whatever name it may be called, is as much a part of the politics or constitution of the nations, as the monarchy or judiciary.

lyptical trumpets make the formal subject of the prospective history. To the church, indeed, and for the sake of the true church, these prophecies were delivered. They have respect to that which, in the progress of human society, is most interesting to the moral world; and consequently to the great social concerns of true religion. In this point of view the history of the Roman empire is of equal interest with the history of the Roman church: but neither the one nor the other is otherwise taken notice of in scripture than as they affect the interests of truth, of piety, and social order. The Divine Being foresaw that during the period under review, there would not be, in fact, many saints upon earth who would not be more or less affected by the moral changes which took place within the bounds of the Roman empire; and as external christianity, or if you will, the great body of the christian church, had been in one complex system *identified* with the state, there is great propriety in making the empire itself the special subject of the predictions.* The rule of interpre-

* We can readily conceive of *Church* and *State* as distinct objects of thought: and we even feel that they are of right distinct. The *Church of God* is, certainly, something quite different from *the kingdoms of men.* They never *can* become identified. True, there is a period approaching, in which "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established upon the tops of the mountains" of national power:—The true church shall influence, thoroughly influence the political conduct of men. Even then, however, *Church* and *State* shall be two different things. The distinction shall be marked and understood. Hitherto it has been almost universally otherwise. In the Roman Empire, at the era of Constantine, *nominal christianity* and *politics* were identified. The *actual Church of God* was always a different thing from the mere *political body;* but *that* which was *called* the Church, became a constituent part of the Empire. It is

tation, which we deduce from these reasonings, is that the symbolical language of this period is to be applied, not ecclesiastically, but in the civil sense, unless the text itself makes upon particular grounds such application necessary. The *earth*, the *sea*, the *rivers*, the *sun*, the *moon*, and the *stars*, are to be considered as political, not religious symbols.

3. It will aid us much in giving a consistent, as well as the true interpretation, to affix correct ideas to the symbol which gives its designation to this period.

The *trumpet* is a well-known instrument, constructed upon principles analogous to the organ of hearing, the ear. The effect of employing this instrument is to increase the sound of the human voice, and render it more audible at a distance. The object is, rapidly to communicate information, or to give notice of any design or event which requires to be speedily known. Trumpets were, by divine appointment, used for various purposes among the Hebrews; and from that usage it is reasonable to infer the symbol in the Apocalypse is drawn. The Lord commanded Moses to construct two silver trumpets for the purpose of assembling the Israelites in the wilderness when they were to decamp, Numb. x. The priests also employed these instruments in announcing the peri-

in this light the prophecy contemplates the subject; and for the very best reason too, because it is the only true light. Nor is it possible really to understand or to interpret correctly these predictions without keeping this fact in view. The Roman Church was as much a part of the Roman Empire as was the Roman Senate. The nation was not sanctified; but the Sanctuary was profaned. The *established* church was a mere worldly sanctuary.

odical returns of the civil year, the sabbatical year, and the year of jubilee. A feast was celebrated at the commencement of the civil year, (the September new-moon) which from this custom was called the feast of trumpets, Lev. xxiii. Numb. xxix. Indeed the first day of every month, and all their religious festivals, were announced by the sound of these instruments. By the trumpet also, the people were called forth to war. To sound a trumpet was a familiar phrase for calling forth to battle. This was perfectly understood by the writers of the New Testament. "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?"* On such occasions the trumpets were to sound an alarm —the signal of hostile invasion. "Shall the trumpet be blown in the city and the people not be afraid?"† Of this description are the seven Apocalyptical trumpets. It is evident from their contents that they were not designed to call either to the sacrifice or to any festival. They are therefore a voice of warning, to the church of God, of the judgments and trials which are to come upon *the corrupt empire* in whose concerns they have a deep interest. This idea corresponds with the use made of the trumpets, according to the style of the former prophets. "Blow the trumpet in Zion, sound an alarm."‡

The *seals*, from the nature of the case, followed one another in chronological order. The space of the roll, unfolded by removing one seal, was fully exhibited before the next seal was broken; but the

* 1 Cor. xiv. 8. † Joel ii. 1.
‡ Amos iii. 6. See also Ezek. xxxiii. 2—4.

voice of warning of one danger may very properly be heard when it approaches, although the cause, of the alarm immediately preceding, may not in every case have been entirely removed.

The judgments of the trumpets are, therefore, to be considered only so far announced in chronological order, as it respects their commencement. It is not necessary that the whole cause of the first alarm shall have terminated before another alarm is given; because one hostile attack may speedily follow another without waiting for the result of the contest. The trumpets follow one another in order as to their beginning; but as to the termination of the events predicted, that is left undetermined.

And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. We shall now proceed,

III. *To explain the first four Trumpets.*

We have already assigned our reasons for considering the Roman empire, in its present complex ecclesiastical political form, the proper object of the judgments announced by the trumpets. It is not merely for the purpose of recording deeds of blood perpetrated by offending man against his fellow-mortals, that these events are esteemed worthy of notice, either in the scheme of prophecy or in history. It is on account of the influence which such political commotions exercise over the moral concerns of accountable creatures; their tendency to illustrate the manner in which Jehovah administers his moral government; and for the sake of their ultimate effect in preparing the way for the universal diffusion of light, life, and hap-

piness, over the abodes of men, that they are esteemed worthy of the place which is assigned to them in the Apocalypse.

In comparing the fact with the prediction, I avail myself principally of the great historical work of the celebrated Gibbon. This man is well known to have been an enemy to the christian religion. He cannot be suspected, therefore, of any design, in the compilation of the *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, to furnish evidence of the fulfilment of sacred prediction.

The preceding prophecy brought the history of Rome down to the year 395, when Theodosius the Great departed this life. "The public safety," says Mr. Gibbon, "seemed to depend on the life and abilities of this single man." In another place he remarks, that "the correspondence of nations was in that age so imperfect and precarious that the revolutions of the north might escape the knowledge of the court; until *the dark cloud* which was collected along the coast of the Baltic, burst in *thunder* upon the banks of the upper Danube."*

TRUMPET I.—Verse 7. *The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.*

We have already shown that EARTH is the symbol of the Roman Empire. Upon this earth the fire was cast from the golden censer, verse 5. Consi-

* Vol. IV. page 56. Phil. 1804.

dered as a whole, the Empire, like the system of nature, has its earth, and its sea, and its rivers, &c. &c.

The OBJECT of the judgment of the first trumpet is the *earth* of the system—the collective body of the population of the empire.

The JUDGMENT itself is, *hail and fire mingled with blood*—Savage warfare bursting from a distance upon the various parts of the empire in frequent and destructive showers.

The CONSEQUENCE is a great consumption of the necessary support, and the principal ornaments of the land. The vegetation,—*the third part of the trees and green grass were burnt up.* The western Roman empire was considered as the third part of the world, and as the *earth* in this instance signifies its population, the trees and the grass are men of high and low degree.*

By comparing this trumpet with the first vial, it will appear that the effects of this judgment lasted until that vial is poured out upon the earth. We are accordingly required to look for some such series of events, as while it tends to the ruin of imperial Rome, will introduce a new system of policy among the inhabitants of the land which is to characterize their social relations until the time of the first

* Sir Isaac Newton remarks, that in the prophetic language, "Tempests, winds, or the motion of the clouds, are put for wars; thunder for the voice of a multitude; storms, lightning, hail, and rain, for a tempest of war. In like manner the earth, animals, and vegetables, are put for the people of several nations and conditions. Trees and green grass express the beauty and fruitfulness of a land; and when the earth is an emblem of nations and dominions, may signify *persons of higher rank, and of common condition.*"

vial. We are directed to expect upon the death of Theodosius, a terrible, barbarous, and overwhelming warfare; laying the land waste before it; and establishing upon the ruins of a civilized empire a species of social order suited only to a savage race, which is to last until the commencement of the third prophetical period.*

History immediately points to the causes which demolished the superb fabric of policy constructed over a great and civilized people, and introduced in its stead the *feudal system* adapted to a barbarous and military race, as the fulfilment of the prediction of the first trumpet. These causes are found in the irruption, of the northern hordes of military barbarians, into the civilized provinces of the empire, overturning in their course all the monuments of Roman greatness, and destroying alike the remaining religion, the literature, and social institutions of an already degenerate people.

In confirmation of these remarks I quote Mr. Faber, who makes a liberal and judicious use of the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. "Upon the decease of this great prince (Theodosius) in the year 395, the *northern cloud,* which had so long been gathering, discharged itself with irresistible fury upon the empire.†" "He died in the month of January, and before the end of the same year the Gothic nation was in arms—The barriers of the Danube were thrown open, the savage warriors of Scythia issued from their forests; and the uncommon

* This idea will be more fully explained under the first vial.

† Vol. II. page 9.

severity of the winter allowed the poet to remark, that they rolled their ponderous waggons over the broad and icy back of the indignant river. The fertile fields of Phocis and Beotia were covered by a deluge of barbarians; who massacred the males of an age to bear arms, and drove away the beautiful females with the spoil and cattle of the flaming villages."*

"Such were the first effects of the *symbolical hailstorm.* It was next carried into Italy and the west; under the guidance of Alaric it passed over Panonia, Istria, and Venetia, and threatened the destruction of imperial Rome herself. Another dark cloud, generated like its fellow in the cold regions of the north, burst in the year 406, upon the banks of the upper Danube, and thence passed on into Italy. Headed by Radagaisus, the northern Germans emigrated from their native land, besieged Florence, and threatened Rome."†

"The flourishing city of Mentz was surprised and destroyed; and many thousand christians were inhumanly massacred in the church. The consuming flames of war spread from the banks of the Rhine over the greatest part of the seventeen provinces of Gaul. That rich and extensive country, as far as the ocean, the Alps, and the Pyrenees, was delivered to the barbarians, who drove before them, in a promiscuous crowd, the bishop, the senator, and the virgin, laden with the spoils of their houses and altars."‡

* Hist. Dec. Vol. IV. p. 29—31. † Faber.
‡ Hist. Dec. Vol. IV. p. 63, 64.

The ravages committed by the Huns under their king Attila, justly denominated "the scourge of God," equalled, if they did not exceed, those of which Alaric and Radagaisus were the principal instruments. Attila having united under himself the Scythians and the Germans, invaded in the year 441 the eastern empire. The Huns under his command destroyed with fire and sword the populous cities of the east.

"The whole breadth of Europe, as it extends above five hundred miles from the Euxine to the Adriatic, was at once invaded, and occupied, and desolated by the myriads of barbarians whom Attila led into the field—the armies of the eastern empire were vanquished in three successive engagements—words the most expressive of total extirpation and erasure are applied to the calamities which they inflicted on seventy cities."* In the year 450 Attila again threatened the peace of the empire. Mankind awaited this decision with awful suspense: victorious in the east, he pursued his march toward Rome; and as he passed, the cities of Altinum, Concordia, and Padua, were reduced into heaps of stones and ashes. He boasted that the grass never grew on the spot where his horse had trod.

Bishop Newton relates upon the authority of Sigonius, that "Attila, when he turned his arms against the emperor Valentinian the Third, entered Gaul with seven hundred thousand men; and not content with taking and spoiling, set most of the cities on

* Hist. Dec. Vol. IV. p. 242.

fire—and filled all places between the Alps and Appennines with flight, depopulation, slaughter, servitude, and desperation. He was preparing to march to Rome, but was diverted from his purpose by a solemn embassy from the emperor, and the promise of an annual tribute."

Such were, in their desolating course, those incursions of the northern barbarous nations which afterwards overthrew the empire.

In the mean time, the succeeding great judgment which contributed to this event is announced.

TRUMPET II.—Verses 8, 9. *And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.*]

The OBJECT of the judgment announced by the sound of the second trumpet is the *sea* of the Roman world. The symbolical signification of waters is explained in Rev. xvii. 15. "The waters which thou sawest, are people, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." The sea, therefore, as a great collection of waters, signifies many people and nations connected in one body politic, in a dissolute and commoved condition. Thus it is distinguished from the solid earth. The symbol earth is the population of the empire in a compact and quiescent state. The sea, the same body in a loose and agitated state. Daniel gives this as the description of the

condition of society at the commencement of each of the great universal monarchies. Chap. vii. 2, 3. "Behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon *the great sea.* And four great beasts came up from the *sea.*"

The JUDGMENT itself is, in this case, a *burning mountain.* A mountain is the symbol of great and established power. Zech. iv. 7. "Who art thou, O great mountain?" The Lord says to the king of Babylon, Jer. li. 25. "Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain—I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain." A burning mountain, therefore, signifies some great power that falls upon the Romans, full of rage, and thus to consume, and to be itself consumed.

The consequences of this judgment are described in terms analogous to the principal symbol. The third part of the sea became blood—the fish perished—the ships were destroyed.

In language resembling, and of course illustrating, these expressions, the prophet announces the destruction of Egyptian power. Ezek. xxix. 3. "Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh, king of Egypt—I will cause the fish of thy river to stick unto thy scales—I will leave thee thrown on the wilderness, thee, and all the fish of thy rivers." This figurative language is explained by plain speech, for the prophet adds, verse 8. "Behold, I will bring a sword upon thee, and cut off man and beast out of thee."

It may be considered superfluous to add, that the Roman shipping, like that of modern nations,

was an instrument, and therefore, a proper emblem, of their riches and their strength.

By the second trumpet the pious were warned of the approach of a striking calamity that should be felt every where throughout the Roman Empire, at a time too when left in great confusion by the irruptions of the barbarous nations from the north. At some period, not far removed from the times of Alaric and Attila, they were to expect some mighty potentate should, with flaming zeal and fury, fall upon the already distracted empire, and massacre its inhabitants without mercy; exhaust the sources of its wealth; and while humbling its power, be also himself hastening to ruin.

History looks back upon the events then anticipated, and confirms both our exposition, and our faith in the sacred prediction. In the year 455, two years after the death of Attila, the principal angel of the cloud of hail from the north, Genseric, set sail from the burning shores of Africa, and suddenly appeared like a mountain on fire hurled from its base, and cast into the sea, at the mouth of the Tiber. Several years before this, he had established himself in Africa at the head of his Vandals, and erected a kingdom which promised to endure for ages. The Vandals, it is true, had, like the other barbarians, come originally from the north; but having planted themselves in the heated sands of Africa, it was from the South, the proper region of fire, they invaded Rome. Of these people Mr. Gibbon speaks in the following manner: Having crossed the straits of Gibraltar, "on a sudden the seven provinces from Tangier to Tripoli were overwhelmed by the inva-

sion of the Vandals. Careless of the distinctions of age, or sex, or rank, they employed every species of indignity and torture, to force from the captives a discovery of their hidden wealth. The stern policy of Genseric justified his frequent examples of military execution: he was not always the master of his own passions, or of those of his followers; and the calamities of war were aggravated by the licentiousness of the Moors, and the fanaticism of the Donatists."*

Having been established, by a treaty with the emperor Valentinian, over all the provinces of Africa, Genseric was looked upon by Eudoxia, the relict of that emperor, for defence against the murderers of her husband.

It was then he invaded Rome at the head of three hundred thousand warriors. The city fell an easy prey into their hands. A bigoted Arian, Genseric availed himself of every opportunity to harass the orthodox christian. During the fourteen days, for which the imperial city was given up to be plundered by his soldiers, the churches, as well as private houses and palaces, were stripped of every thing valuable which they contained. He returned with immense wealth to Africa;† and after his death the kingdom of the Vandals ceases for years to make a figure in history. Justinian reduced Africa again into the form of a province.

The western empire, however, did not long survive the effects of this burning mountain. "It struggled

* Hist. Dec. Vol. IV. p. 220.

† Hist. Dec. Vol. IV. p. 310—315.

hard, and gasped, as it were, for breath, through eight short and turbulent reigns, for the space of twenty years, and at length expired under Augustulus."*

TRUMPET III.—Verses 10, 11. *And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.*]

The OBJECT of this judgment, as well as of the former, is the symbolical waters—the *people.* They are not, however, considered as united in one body politic, so much as in their separate state in the several provinces and departments of the empire. It is not the *sea;* but the *rivers and fountains.*

The JUDGMENT is represented as a great star fallen from heaven. The heaven of the Roman system, is the whole frame of its government. A great star is a distinguished officer of the government. Its burning like a lamp signifies the sufferings which such ruler both causes and undergoes, in his fall from power.

The CONSEQUENCES are bitterness and death. The name of the fallen star is *Wormwood,* to betoken the bitter effects of the judgment.

This representation has an allusion to the description which the prophet Isaiah gives of the downfal

* Bishop Newton.

of the king of Babylon. Chap. xiv. 4—12. "Thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say,—the Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers—how art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, (*day-star*,) son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which did weaken the nations!"

It is with great propriety, therefore, that Mr. Mede explains this star of the prince of Rome. A fallen star, in the language of symbols, signifies either the downfal of a king, or the apostacy of a minister:* but the prophecy does not describe the state of the church; and we therefore cannot admit the application of this prediction to any of the early heretics, or as Dr. Johnston does, to the bishop of Constantinople. It is somewhat strange that so judicious an expositor as bishop Newton should have applied the fallen star to Genseric, who was a triumphant conqueror. The observations of Mr. Faber upon this subject are more appropriate. "The last emperor, Momyllus, or Augustulus, was deposed by Odoacer king of the Heruli, who put an end to the very name of the western empire. The fall of this star was productive of much bloodshed among the *rivers and fountains*, the Gothic governments of the west, which now filled

* "*Stars*, in prophetic style, are figurative representations of many things; among others, they signify kings, or kingdoms, eminent persons of great authority and power. Thus, in the prophecy of Balaam, Numb. xxiv. 17. *There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel.* The power of the goat over other powers, is represented in Dan. viii. 10. *It cast down some of the host, and of the stars.*" LOWMAN.

the place formerly occupied by the Roman empire." "At that unhappy period," said Mr. Gibbon, "the Saxons fiercely struggled with the natives for the possession of Britain; Gaul and Spain were divided between the powerful monarchies of the Franks and the Visigoths, and the dependent kingdoms of the Suevi and Burgundians; Africa was exposed to the cruel persecutions of the Vandals, and the savage insults of the Moors; Rome and Italy, as far as the banks of the Danube, were afflicted by an army of barbarian mercenaries, whose lawless tyranny was succeeded by the reign of Theodoric the Ostrogoth. All the subjects of the empire, who, by the use of the Latin language, more particularly deserved the name and privileges of Romans, were oppressed by the disgrace and calamities of foreign conquest; and the victorious nations of Germany established a new system of manners and government in the western countries of Europe."

TRUMPET IV.—Verse 12. *And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.*]

After the extinction of the line of the *western Cesars*, by the *downfal of the star of Rome* in the person of Augustulus, under the third trumpet, the *fourth* angel predicts a very general obscuration of the lights of the empire.

The OBJECT of this judgment, are the sun, moon, and stars; the JUDGMENT itself consists in a stroke inflicted upon them; the CONSEQUENCES of which are, that the day shone not, and the night also was deprived of its wonted light, throughout the dominions of ancient Rome—the *third part* of the known world. "Darkening, or *smiting* of the sun, moon, and stars," says Sir Isaac Newton, "are put for the setting of a kingdom, or the desolation thereof." Light is the symbol of joy; darkness, of adversity. Thus doth the prophet Isaiah describe the burden of Babylon. Chap. xiii. "The noise of a multitude like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle. Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them. *The stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof, shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.* Therefore I will shake the heavens," &c. In a similar manner the prophet Ezekiel describes the destruction of the kingdom of Egypt. Chap. xxxii. 7, 8. *I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee.*

It was in the year 476, history informs us, that Augustulus, the *diminutive* Cesar Augustus, fell from his throne. But the ancient frame of Roman government remained for some time after the downfal of this Imperial Star. The political heaven, although

shaking, was not yet removed; neither were all its lights extinguished. In the time of Odoacer, the Roman Senate, the Consuls, and other magistrates, were only subjected to a suspension for two years. When Theodoric founded, in the year 498, the Gothic kingdom of Italy, he permitted Rome to maintain in its ancient government some appearance of its former splendour. It was in the year 566, after a series of bloody and doubtful wars, that Italy was reduced into the provincial form, by the emperor of the east; the whole form of Roman government was abolished; the Senate, and Consuls, and other magistrates of Rome entirely put down; and the proud city, the queen of the nations, was reduced into the miserable condition of a tributary Dukedom. Then was fully accomplished the judgment announced by the sounding of the fourth trumpet.

Among the expositors of the Apocalyptical prophecies, there is, as in other instances, a considerable diversity of opinions with respect to the interpretation of the four trumpets first in order. Those who are agreed about the general period to which they refer, differ, however, in matters of detail. Mr. Faber, who commonly improves on bishop Newton, seems to me to have erred in the application of history to the fourth trumpet. He has offered, I admit, an unanswerable objection to the exposition of bishop Newton; but he has himself applied the *fourth* and the *third* to the same event, the downfal of the last Emperor of the west. In this he is entirely wrong. The bishop was but half right, however, in applying it both to the overthrow of Augustulus,

and the entire demolition of the old Roman Senate. It belongs to the last event alone. Mr. Lowman, in this particular, is more correct than those who have succeeded him. To him, upon this subject, I refer those who are anxious to see my interpretation supported with a greater variety of historical facts.

The grand object of the judgments of all the trumpets is to overthrow the *fourth and iron kingdom*, which even after it assumed the christian name continued to be a *beast;* and in this precise point of view is the object of these judgments. Its western dominions, being for a long time the place in which the saints had the most interest, occupy of course, for the most part, the attention of prophecy. The eastern empire is, notwithstanding, far from being overlooked. The two succeeding trumpets particularly apply to the fourth kingdom as it existed in the regions east of Italy: but upon the dismemberment of the *western empire* and its division, according to sacred prediction, into ten distinct powers, or horns, the business of the trumpets is, with respect to it, suspended until "the time of the end;" and preparation is made for the period of the vials, by which this new power, the ten-horned beast, is to be destroyed. The period of the trumpets, nevertheless, progresses as it respects the eastern empire, as shall be made apparent in the ensuing lecture. The *Seventh* Trumpet announces the entire overthrow of Antichristian Rome.

I shall now bring the discourse to a close with some remarks upon this part of the second prophetical period.

IV. *The Concluding Reflections.*

1. However great the confusion, which from time to time appears over the history of the nations, it is becoming the ministers of Jesus Christ both to understand for themselves, and to point out to others, the relation in which the events of history stand to the progress of the Christian religion, and to the interests of the church of God. Like "the living creatures" of the Apocalypse, it is their duty to say to intelligent and inquiring men, "Come and see." Were it possible completely to separate the concerns of this world from those of Zion, so that they should cease to exercise any reciprocal influence on one another, there might be a propriety in the watchman of Israel's refusing to answer any inquiries, such as *What of the night*, or *the morning?* This state of things is, however, morally impossible. The policy of those nations, in which christianity is either tolerated or established, will be more or less affected by ecclesiastical considerations; and it is unreasonable not to expect that the church will feel the influence of worldly political management. All the events which come to pass, are included in the plans of Providence; and such of course as are interesting to the moral world, deserve the attention of the christian pastor. Divine revelation too, in its precepts, and narrative, and predictions, pays particular attention to national concerns; and thus not only sets an example to the ministers of Christ of their proper duty, but also imposes an obligation upon them to be acquainted with the history of the world, in order to understand and expound the scriptures.

You will not, therefore, brethren, charge us with intermeddling unduly with your civil concerns, or with violating the sanctity of the Lord's day, by laying before you, with the necessary exposition, the predictions of the Apocalypse. Assuredly, the Christian who is persuaded that all things shall work together for good to them who love God; and who is qualified by liberal views of God's moral government to form a proper estimate of the subject, will consider of importance that great system of causes, and their various operations, which finally demolished the western Roman empire, in which, since the revolution of Constantine, civil and ecclesiastical concerns were so blended together, that they could not be otherwise than in idea distinguished.

The total change which took place in the state of society in Europe in this period, renders the era of the Trumpets interesting to the moralist. "How far this change ought to be lamented is not now a matter of much dispute. The human species was reduced to such a degree of debasement by the pressure of Roman despotism, that we can hardly be sorry at any means, however violent, which removed or lightened the load. But we cannot help lamenting, at the same time, that this revolution was the work of nations so little enlightened by science, and polished by civilization."*

It was by such means that the ignorance which served the purposes of the Roman antichrist, was universally spread; and thus upon the downfal of Imperial Rome, "the man of sin" was speedily revealed.

* Russel's Modern Europe, Vol. I. p. 11.

2. Amidst the revolutions which desolate the nations, we, Christians, have ample grounds of hope and confidence. Our Saviour reigns, and will do all his pleasure. Light shall arise out of darkness. Order shall spring from confusion. The divine purposes shall be accomplished. The generation of his children shall be saved.

Behold him, Christians, in whom you have believed, standing before the altar of incense in the upper temple, making continual intercession for us. We verily have an Advocate with the Father. He will not plead in vain. His blood, shed for the remission of the sins of many, speaketh better things than that of Abel. The blood of the martyrs, unjustly shed, calls for vengeance on the foes of religion. The blood of the covenant, making satisfaction to divine justice, calls for the salvation of believers. *I will, O Father, that they whom thou hast given to me, may be with me, that where I am they may behold my glory.* The prayers, the praises, the services of the saints, are accepted: for they are received into the golden censer, and presented by the High Priest. He never, in any instance, neglects the sighs of the prisoner, or turns a deaf ear to the solicitations of his anxious disciples. He is ever merciful. He is moreover just. He scatters coals of fire upon their heads who obey not the gospel. When he has served up to his Father the devotion of his own church, he casts the contents of the censer upon the earth. All religion, which is not sanctified by his grace, becomes a curse to its professors. All, who have no religion, remain under the sentence of condemna-

tion. The all-merciful Saviour is the all-righteous Governor. His sceptre is right. His enemies shall perish when his wrath is kindled but a little. Fly to him for safety. Fly to him speedily; before death and judgment shall overtake you. He invites you to himself. He commands you to betake yourselves to the city of refuge. He assures you of a ready welcome. *Whosoever cometh shall not be cast out.* Represent, with prayer and with boldness, your personal condition before the throne of grace. Forget not to mention your brethren in the profession of religion. Plead for the cause of your invaded, your sinful, your distracted country. The sword is hanging over your heads. Your friends, your neighbours, are already suffering. Your business is stopped; your commerce is spoiled; your relatives are carried into captivity; your villages are laid in ruins. War, with its accompanying horrors of robberies, rapes, and murders, rages in your borders. Repent of your transgressions; mourn for the sins of the land; confess the justness of the Divine judgments. Trust not, in the day of trial, on the arm of flesh. Call upon your Redeemer to turn to you in mercy. He is the Governor of the nations. He directs the whirlwind. He controls the fury of the battle. He puts down and sets up at pleasure. The race is not to the swift, neither is the battle to the strong.

The time for visiting Zion is at hand. Arise, and call upon your God, who is able to deliver you. "Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us. Lord, in trouble

have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them." When the blast of the trumpet is heard from afar, it is time to fly to him "Who has been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall."

Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.

THE TWO WO TRUMPETS.

LECTURE VI.

Rev. ix....*And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth; and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth, &c. &c.*

THE religion, taught by the Son of God for our salvation, hath two great and distinguishing qualities—Truth of doctrine, and pure morality. Affecting both the understanding and the heart of man, with that invisible power which produces real piety, it makes itself externally evident, in the profession of an orthodox faith, and in a deportment truly moral. When either of these, when either truth or holiness is absolutely wanting, we do not merely suspect the absence of piety; but we are certain that it does not exist. Divine revelation assures us that Christians are all children of light, and are also sanc-

tified. By works without faith it is impossible to please God; and faith without works is dead.

If this, brethren, be a correct representation of christianity, it is easy to observe the certain evidences of its decline. The departure of God and of true religion, from among a professing people, is indicated by a growing deficiency in orthodoxy and virtue, or in either of the two; and although, it may indeed commence with any one of them, it will certainly in a short time, if a reformation do not prevent it, extend also to the other, and accordingly affect them both. Wo be unto that people who do not resist the introduction of error with alacrity, and who do not promptly express their detestation at the impure behaviour of professed Christians. Such was the condition of the Catholic church during the period of the Apocalyptical trumpets, particularly that of the last three, at the close of the preceding chapter, called the Wo Trumpets. *And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Wo, Wo, Wo to the inhabiters of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the Trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound.*

We have, in this chapter, the prophetic history of the

LAST PART OF THE SECOND PERIOD,

including two of the Wo Trumpets, being the fifth and sixth. I shall lay before you, what appears to me to be the correct interpretation of each of these two, and conclude my discourse with practical reflections.

We have, in the last lecture, given a short account of the state of the fourth great kingdom of the earth, from the time of Constantine to the dismemberment of the western empire of the Cesars into several independent kingdoms. Then, according to the predictions of Daniel, this beast displayed his ten distinct toes or horns; and according to the Apocalypse, the beast with seven heads and ten horns was about to be fully revealed. Had it been the design of prophecy to pursue this subject in precise chronological order, limiting its remarks by the destinies of the western empire, we should now of course, pass on to the contemplation of "THE MAN OF SIN," and to the events of that period which includes the reign and fall of ANTICHRIST. We should in that case have entered upon the period of the vials, the first four of which immediately refer to the state of things produced by the four Apocalyptical Trumpets already expounded.

This could not, however, be done with consistency. The grand design, of exhibiting the state of the moral world as affected by, or affecting the social concerns of the christian religion, renders it necessary that the line of chronological order be in the first instance followed from the fourth trumpet to the Eastern Roman empire.

At this period it was more interesting to the church of God to know the condition of the East, because the emperor of the east was still the principal power, and because more learning, and science, and probably more of the members of the church, were found at that age, beyond the boundaries of the western em-

pire. In process of time, indeed, it became otherwise, and of course we find that after this period comparatively little notice is bestowed in prophecy upon either the Greek churches, or the nations in which they are established.

The period of the trumpets is that of the christian empire; and after the events of the fourth had utterly demolished the political heavens of the western system, it was proper under the fifth trumpet to exhibit the condition of the eastern third of the world. The trumpets must, of course, unfold the scenes which completely overturned the whole christian empire.

It was about the middle of the sixth century that the judgment announced by the fourth trumpet had produced the obscuration of the political lights of ancient Rome; and from this event we are to turn our attention, during the remainder of the Period of the Trumpets, to the state of the moral world in those regions over which the emperors of Constantinople claimed the supreme power, until we shall witness the overthrow of this last representative of the Cesars. To such concerns the two trumpets before us have reference. We shall give the

INTERPRETATION OF EACH.

TRUMPET V.—Being the First Wo Trumpet. Verses 1—11. *And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth; and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit,*

as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it: and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions; and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

We have already assigned our reasons for laying the scene of these events in the eastern empire: and the interpretation must proceed accordingly. In the progress of my exposition abundant internal evi-

dence will be furnished by the prophecy itself, which, independently of the introductory argument, will prove that we have not misunderstood the scene of the vision.

The sounding of this Wo Trumpet announces an approaching judgment; and a hieroglyphical representation of the particular agents and events, is immediately made to the apostle, and, by him communicated to the church.

The principal objects of attention to the expositor, in this representation, are

The fallen star opening the pit—The locusts issuing from the smoke of the pit—Their king Apollyon—The depredations which they committed—And the time of their depredations.

1. *The fallen Star.*

This symbol has been already explained.* A star fallen from heaven to earth, signifies either a civil or theological character *degraded* from the political or ecclesiastical heavens. I cannot, therefore, conceive of a greater perversion of figurative language than to apply it, with Dr. Johnston, to the exaltation of Pope Boniface III. to the bad eminence of universal bishop, by the emperor. The application of it to Mahomet, whether considered in the light of the founder of a religion, or the head of an army, is also incorrect. Not *degradation*, but elevation and success, characterized this eminent impostor.

* Page 136.

He never fell from either an ecclesiastical or political heaven. The contrary of being a fallen star was the case both with the eastern impostor, and with the Pope of Rome. They rose from obscurity to eminence.

This fallen star, with a key bestowed on him, opened the bottomless pit—in the providence of God he is permitted to promote the purposes of fallen angels. Instantly a smoke ascends from the pit, the place of impiety and suffering, that obscures the sun and the air. Truth is light. Error is darkness. A system of misrepresentation and falsehood, originating from the father of lies, and deceiver of the nations, is the smoke of the pit by which the sun and the air were darkened.* Such are the doctrines of the KORAN.

The *fallen star*, is in plain terms, a *degraded* man, who is instrumental in contriving a system of delusion, of which hell approves, and by which moral darkness is spread abroad among the nations. The description suits the monk Sergius.

We shall as yet only name this man, and proceed,

2. *To take a view of the locusts issuing from the smoke of the pit.*

Their appearance is formidable in a high degree. They are compared to a troop of horse prepared for the battle. Adorned with *crowns*, with a *manly* coun-

* By SMOKE, in the figurative language of Scripture, are denoted dark confused doctrines clouding the light of pure revelation.—*Woodhouse*, p. 261.

tenance, with effeminate ornaments, *as the hair of women*, with *breastplates of iron*, with *scorpion stings, the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots*, and they had *the teeth of lions* to devour their prey.

The natural locusts are flying insects very destructive to the fruits of the earth. They abound in Asia, and sometimes fly in astonishing multitudes, like an immense cloud which darkens the air, threatening destruction wherever they light. They constituted one of the plagues of Egypt, Exod. x. 14—19. and are used by the prophets as the symbol of a destroying army, Joel i. 4. and ii. 4—6. The symbolical locusts under consideration, issued from the figurative smoke, that is, were excited to their destructive excursions by hellish delusions.

We are, therefore, to look for the fulfilment of this prophecy, to some fierce and barbarous people, who appear after the close of the 6th century, in the eastern empire, influenced to cruel warfare in immense multitudes, under the auspices of a system of false doctrines contrived by the instrumentality of some "fallen star." The history of Arabia, the natural seat of the locusts, furnishes the interpretation of the prophecy in the conduct of the Saracens.

3. *The locusts had a king over them.* He was a messenger of hell, the angel of the bottomless pit. His name is Abaddon, or Apollyon. Both these words signify a destroyer. This king is the personage, who acts as chief over the destroying armies, who are permitted in the providence of God to inflict judgments upon the eastern Roman empire.

4. *The power* with which this new foe is invested appears to be placed under restrictions. The depredations of the locusts are limited to that class of people who *have not the seal of God on their foreheads.* They are confined to those nations and people, who either opposed the christian religion, or made a profession of it without receiving its truths, or experiencing its living power. True Christians are to have remarkable protection.

5. *The time* in which these locusts prevail, like the natural locusts which expire with the summer that gave them origin, is said to be five months.

Sir Isaac Newton, on account of the repetition of five months, verses 5 and 10, thinks it proper to double the prophetic time, and render it ten symbolical months of thirty days each. And according to the prophetic style of a day for a year, this would amount to a period of three centuries. There is, however, no necessity for thus doubling the time specified. It is, indeed, twice mentioned in the text: but not with the design of adding the two sums together. Bishop Newton is more correct in rendering the interpretation, one hundred and fifty years.

The effects of the judgment announced by the sounding of the fifth trumpet may remain for a much longer space of time; but the torments inflicted by the Arabian locusts are represented as peculiarly great during the period of five months, being one hundred and fifty prophetic days, a century and a half.

This trumpet must be accordingly explained of the WO caused by the Mahometan Saracens, for the

space of one hundred and fifty years after the rise of their false prophet.

The events of that period are so interesting a part of the history of man, and had such an effect upon the christian churches of the east, that they ought to be known to intelligent men, and undoubtedly merit a place in the sacred system of prophecy.

That great peninsula, which is washed on the south and east by the waves of the Indian Ocean, and Persian Gulf, and on the west by the waters of the Red Sea, has since the remotest ages been known by the name of Arabah or Arabia. This name it received from the most distinguished of its original settlers, Yarab* the son of Joktan, and the fifth in descent from Shem the son of Noah. Ishmael, the son of Abram by Hagar, settled with his family in this country; and his descendants were mingled with the former inhabitants. It was not long before the idolatry of the Sabeans, who derive their name from *Saba*, the great grandson of Joktan, became prevalent through the greater part of this extensive territory. But of its internal history from the time of Moses until the commencement of the christian era, we know very little. From the Greeks and Romans we have derived our knowledge of ancient nations; and as Arabia defied the power of these conquering empires, they have not been at the pains of describing its geography, or recording its history.

The Jews were scattered throughout this country at a very early period, and the first ministers of christianity planted churches among the Arabs. Be-

* Jerah, Gen. x. 26.

fore the close of the sixth century, the period in which Arabian history became generally interesting, the Nestorian heresy had spread over the greater part of the churches of this peninsula. Piety and morals had declined along with orthodoxy among Christians; and the Jews and the idolaters adhered to their religion more from habit than any conviction of duty. The most powerful of the Arabian tribes were the *Koreish* descendants of Ishmael. They possessed the distinguished honour of being guardians to the Caaba,* and the chiefs united with the love and the practice of war, the profession of merchandise. They carried on an extensive and lucrative commerce, between Persia and Egypt, and India and Ethiopia.

In the year 579 was born at Mecca the celebrated Mahomet,† the king and apostle of the Arabs; or to use the words of the sacred text, *Apollyon the destroyer*, king of the locusts. He was descended from one of the most ancient and powerful families. His father Abdallah was the favourite son of Motalleb, a man of great opulence and liberality, who succeeded his father Hashem in the principality of

* The *Caaba* was the sacred temple of these idolaters. It stood in the city of Mecca, and contained about 360 idols, besides the statue of HOBAL, the principal object of their worship. To this temple a yearly visit, accompanied with gifts and costly oblations, must be paid by the devotees from all parts of Arabia.

† "The prophet *Mohammed* can no longer be stripped of the famous, though improper, appellation of Mahomet: the well-known cities of Aleppo, Damascus, and Cairo, would almost be lost in the strange descriptions of *Halcb*, *Damashk*, and *Al Cahira;* and we are pleased to blend the three Chinese monosyllables Con-fu-tzee, in the respectable name of Confucius." *Gibbon.*

Mecca, and custody of the Caaba. The aged Motalleb outlived his son, and took under his protection the orphan grandson. In the eighth year of his age, however, Mahomet was deprived of this guardian; and came of course under the immediate protection of Abu Taleb his uncle, who, himself a merchant of the first rank and wealth, now succeeded to all the dignities of his deceased father.

It appears to me altogether improper, therefore, to represent this impostor as rising from obscurity to eminence. He was left indeed in early life an orphan without a patrimonial inheritance: but he had no alliance with poverty. He was educated in the first families of the age: his connexions were the first in power and rank: he travelled along with his uncle through Syria and Egypt, while engaged in mercantile pursuits: he was early made acquainted with the absurd mysteries of the prevailing religion; and under Abu Taleb, the victorious general of the Koreish, he served in a successful war, in which he acquired the rudiments of the science in which he afterwards became so famous in the east. In the twenty-eighth year of his age, Mahomet found himself possessed of independent property: and to his aspiring mind the most flattering prospects began to be unfolded. This state of things was brought about by his marriage with *Cadigha*, an opulent widow of Mecca, whose extensive mercantile concerns he had, for three years from the death of her first husband, conducted to great advantage.

He now began to cherish the hope that he might repair the loss incurred by the death of his

father Abdallah, who, had he survived his grandfather, would have been the heir of his fortunes; and would have of course transmitted to his son the first dignities of Mecca. His intercourse with men of different nations and religions, was sufficient to convice him, that, in that age, there was no possibility of acquiring influence over the minds of men, without some show of religion. That of the Caaba was evidently declining; and, in its present state, the chief office of the system was lodged in other, and very powerful hands, from which he could have no hopes of wresting it for himself. The Christians were greatly divided; and the Jewish system was not well adapted to the condition of the Arabians. New sects of different descriptions were frequently springing up with various success. He resolved to become the prophet and apostle of a new religion. Intelligent, wealthy, courageous, crafty, ambitious, and eloquent, he had much to expect from his influence with the people; and the patronage of his powerful relatives promised him in the beginning protection from danger. He was in short remarkably qualified to be the king of barbarous fanatics, or an angel of hell. All that was necessary was to open the pit, that the smoke which generated the locusts might issue forth—that a suitable system of religion might be contrived for the deluded inhabitants of Arabia, a mongrel race of idolaters, half convinced of the folly of their present faith, of Jews, who knew but little of their own Bible, and of professed Christians, without understanding or piety.

Mahomet now felt one deficiency which was likely to prove irremediable. He, with all his natural

talents and acquirements, lived in a society into which literature had never been introduced; and he could not himself either read or write. The Jews and the Christians were commonly designated as *the people of the book;* and no new system could be reasonably expected to prove successful without it were placed in that respect upon a footing with others. Without the *smoke of the pit* nothing could be done. The KORAN must be contrived and executed; and to this task the son of Abdallah is entirely unequal. He had not the *key of the abyss.* The Koran is the smoke from which the locusts spread over the land; and the author of the Koran, whoever he is, (and it is certain it could not be the pretended apostle himself,*) is the person designated in the prophecy as *the fallen star,* unto whom was given the key of the bottomless pit. This man is Sergius. To him must be ascribed the work of composing the religion of the Musselman. The histories of that age appear, it is true, at a loss whether to ascribe the work to a Jew, a Persian, or a monk; for each of those three were associates of the impostor: but internal evidence is furnished by the Koran itself that it owes

* Mr. Gibbon, who appears to have had a great affection for the *impostor Mahomet,* as well as for *Julian the apostate,* admits that the false prophet was illiterate; and even censures Mr. White (*Bampton Lecture*) for suggesting a doubt upon the subject. I think it, however, extremely probable, that the genius of Mahomet could not be satisfied with remaining entirely ignorant of letters. He certainly had a sufficient opportunity of learning, at least how to read and write. I suspect this was in part his business with *Sergius,* and during the time of his retirement in the cave of Hera. Unremitted attention for two or three years might accomplish this object.

its origin to some one acquainted with Christianity; and undoubtedly the Apocalyptical prediction determines the question.

It was a *fallen star* that opened the bottomless pit, and set loose the *smoke* of imposture, from whence issued the Arabian *locusts* under their king, the *destroyer*.

Sergius, called, by the Arabian writers, *the monk Bahira*, was a minister of the christian church, who had fallen into error and immorality of the deepest die. He had belonged to that class of people, who in those days of dissention were called *Nestorians*, from the celebrated bishop *Nestorius*, of Constantinople.

The dispute between this arrogant Prelate, and the still more haughty *Cyril*, bishop of Alexandria, had more of ambitious policy than of religion to give it origin and support. It began about the titles of the Virgin Mary: and the question was, whether she ought to be honoured with the epithet Θεοτοκος, or mother of God. Nestorius, in adopting the negative, was upon the side of truth. This dispute, however, continued until, in vain attempts to explain the union of two natures in Jesus Christ, the Nestorians asserted that there were two persons* united under one aspect.† This fixed upon them the charge of heresy; and their enemies triumphed. To this sect of Christians, spread over Persia and Arabia before the time of Mahomet, Sergius, the intimate associate of Mahomet, and the principal contriver of the system which bears that impostor's name, be-

* υποστασεις. † *Barsopa*, or προσωπος.

longed. He had contracted an intimacy with the youthful and engaging nephew of Abu Taleb, whom he first met at Bostra, a city on the confines of Syria;* and it was further cherished by the particular attention afterwards bestowed upon him, by the elegant husband of the opulent Cadigha, when he revisited that city, or when they met at Jerusalem.† Shortly after this, Sergius for high crimes was degraded from his ministry, and became a "fallen star." Excommunicated from the church, and expelled from the monastery, he fled to Mecca. A man of genius and literature, suited to the purposes of Mahomet, and now reduced to the necessity of labouring for his bread, he entered readily into the views of the grandson of the famed Motalleb. Both were unrestrained by moral principle: the one was needy; and the other a splendid merchant, of uncommon address and boundless ambition. This will account for the connexion which they formed. Theophanes, Zonaras, Cedrenus, Anastasius, the author of the Historia Miscella, Friar Richard, and several other historians, speak of this fallen Monk, both under his proper name, and that of Bahira,‡ which he assumed in Arabia as the agent in composing the Koran.§ He was the *Gabriel* ‖ of Mahomet. When Sergius

* Pockock, Hist. Arab. 53—127.

† Prideaux's Life of Mahomet, p. 32.

‡ *Bahira* is an Arabic word, signifying a *camel* turned out, on account of its former usefulness, to free pasture.

§ Prideaux's Life of Mahomet, p. 31—33.

‖ The impostor pretended immediate intercourse with the angel Gabriel.

had finished his task, he was put to death by his base patron, for fear he should afterwards betray the imposture.

The new religion progressed after a few years with extraordinary rapidity; and in its progress became the *wo*, announced by the *fifth Apocalyptical trumpet, which fell upon the eastern empire*, and ravaged the adjacent countries, tormenting men for one hundred and fifty years of Saracenic invasion and conquest.

It was in the year 606, Mahomet commenced his imposture by retiring, under pretence of extraordinary sanctity, to the *cave of Hera*. In 612 he appeared as the apostle at the head of his disciples, publicly to propagate the new doctrine. Then did the locusts issue from the smoke of the pit, opened by the excommunicated monk, under their king Apollyon. In the year 762 the Caliph Almansor built the city of *Bagdad*, and called it "THE CITY OF PEACE." A stop was then put to the devastation of the locusts. The Saracen empire continued for a longer time, but after this period it lost the disorderly *locust* character, and became a more regular commonwealth. Between the years 612 and 762, during the *five months* of prophecy, or 150 years, the Saracens overrun and subdued with terrible depredations, Syria, Persia, India, Egypt, and Spain.

We may now say with the text,

Verse 12. *One wo is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.*

The second wo is announced in the succeeding verses, to which we now turn your intention.

TRUMPET VI.—Verses 13—21. *And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. And the rest of the men, which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood; which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.*

This is the description laid before us of the *second wo.* The *first* had already passed in vision before

the apostle John. "One wo is past." Two additional woes shall put a period to the empire which is the object of these several judgments. "There come two woes more hereafter." The eastern empire, the object of the first wo, still continued to stand; and is of course attacked under the *sixth* trumpet. Meanwhile the western empire revives under a new form, and becomes both more guilty in the sight of God, and more alarmingly interesting to the church; and in this character it is the principal subject of both description and judgments, in the succeeding prophecies of the Revelation. Its downfal is effected by the *third wo*, or the seventh trumpet. At present, however, we are to expound the sixth trumpet.

I have already in this discourse given my reasons for applying the *first* and *second wo* to the Christian empire, as it still remained in the *east*, Constantinople being the seat of power. The Arabian locusts under Mahomet, gave to this power a shock of great violence; but it is under the *sixth trumpet* that it is completely overthrown.

History so minutely describes this overthrow, and the means by which it was effected, that there is no avoiding the application of the second wo, to the Mahometan conquerors of the empire of the Cesars. The text itself too, is so obviously descriptive of these invaders, that almost every Commentator of celebrity explains it of the followers of the impostor of Mecca. Mede, and Newton, and Faber, particularly, have so correctly illustrated the judgment of this trumpet, that I deem it sufficient to refer you to these writers for a satisfactory discussion. The

objections of Mr. Woodhouse to this part of the scheme of interpretation are effectually superseded by the considerations already submitted. Even he, however, is constrained to acknowledge the application of the sixth trumpet to the Mahometan devastations.

The objects which, in this part of scripture, require the attention of the expositor, are the Euphratean angels—the specified time of their conquests—and, the character and consequences of their warfare.

1. THE EUPHRATEAN ANGELS AND HORSEMEN. Verses 13, 14, 16.—*And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, loose* THE FOUR ANGELS *which are bound in* THE GREAT RIVER EUPHRATES. *And the four angels were loosed.—And the number of the army of* THE HORSEMEN *were two hundred thousand thousand.*

The command to loose the *four angels* is from the Lord God of heaven and earth—A voice from the *four horns of the golden altar.* Vengeance upon the sins of men is proclaimed from the very sanctuary. The Saviour inflicts merited punishment upon them who neglect the salvation which he offers. The command to loose is immediately obeyed.

The *four angels* which were thus set at liberty to bring the *second wo* upon the eastern empire, are the four principal sultanies of the Turks. These were seated in their respective capitals, Bagdad, Damascus, Aleppo, and Iconium.

It is not taking an unjust liberty with the text to explain the *four angels* as the prophetical symbol of four sovereignties. An *angel* is a *messenger;* and, when *communities* are employed in the providence of God for accomplishing his work, it is perfectly in point to represent *them* as his *messengers.* A similar use is made of the term angel in reference to ecclesiastical proceedings, in the descriptive part of the Apocalypse. In the epistles to the churches of Asia Minor, *the whole ministry* of each city is addressed as one distinct community, under the title of "the angel of the church." This is evident from the fact, that the *one* figurative angel is frequently addressed as *many* distinct agents throughout these epistles. It is equally appropriate to represent as an angel any other community, employed in its united character under a suitable leader, to execute the will of God.

It is not at all necessary to this interpretation that these four Turkish sultanies should have always existed as distinct sovereignties; or that this people never should have made war upon any christian nation before the sounding of the sixth trumpet: But, if before the time pointed out in the sacred prediction, the Turks had been well known; and *four* Turkish sultanies had in fact existed, and had also been well known as distinct communities, although actually acknowledging at the time of this wo one common head, there is certainly no incongruity in designating them as in the text under consideration. England, Scotland, and Ireland, are still commonly spoken of as "*the three kingdoms,*" although they

have been united for two centuries under one sovereign.

The words of the prophecy furnish us with other reasons for adopting this interpretation, and defending it from the animadversions of Archdeacon Woodhouse. The *four angels were bound* in the great river Euphrates; and it is not until they were loosed that as myriads of horsemen they marched on their ferocious warfare for the entire subversion of the Greek empire. The location of these four powers in the regions watered by this mighty stream, affords a geographical description too accurate to be overlooked. Every scholar acquainted with the history of the Turks, is well assured that this was the principal seat of their power for a long period of time preceding their successful attacks upon the empire of Constantinople. Mr. Joseph Mede, and bishop Newton, have both faithfully applied the facts to the prediction. I shall show, in the proper place, that there is sufficient reason for understanding *figuratively* the river Euphrates in the judgment of the sixth vial, inflicted upon the symbolical Babylon, the Latin Roman empire, although in this case we understand it *literally* as designating the country from which the enemy came who overthrew the eastern image of the Cesars.

In the territories adjoining the Euphrates, the Turkish sultanies had providentially been confined against their will by the successful expeditions of the European Christians, until the latter part of the thirteenth century. Then the *angels* of destruction were *loosed;* and the Euphratean horsemen in im-

mense multitudes fell upon the subjects of the Christian empire of the east. *And the number of the army of horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand.*

2. *The specified time of their conquests* next demands our attention. Verse 15. *And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.*]

The third part of men, is the prophetical expression for the subjects of the great empire, the object of this wo. To *torment* these men, the expression employed under the preceding wo, (verse 5.) is to harass and distress the empire; but to *slay* them, signifies the extinction of its name and power. This was to have been accomplished in a definite time.

A year, in the symbolical style, consists of as many natural years as there are, according to the Jewish chronology, natural days in a year; and thus, the hour, day, month, and year, will amount to a period of 391 years and 15 days. An hour is the twenty-fourth part of a day, and consequently in prophetical style represents the twenty-fourth part of a year. *Each day for a year,* Ezek. iv. 6.*

* See also in explanation of the origin of this mode of calculation, Numb. xiv. 34. and in confirmation, Dan. ix. 24.

	Years.	Days.
An hour is		15
A day is	1	
A month is	30	
A year is	360	
The whole time	391	15

According to this calculation the time allotted for the complete subjugation of the Constantinopolitan power, and for the establishment of the Turkish empire upon its ruins, is, from the first success of the Euphratean horsemen, a period of 391 years and a few days. Had history been as faithful to the dates in respect of days, as it has been in mentioning the years in which signal events have come to pass, there is no doubt but the most perfect precision would appear in applying the facts to the sacred prediction. The first conquests of the Ottoman Turks over the Christians took place in the capture of the famous city *Cutahi;* and the last victory by which any advantages accrued to that power in the augmentation of the empire, was at the capture of *Cameniec.*

Cameniec was taken in	1672
Cutahi was taken in	1281
	391

"The Turks," says Mr. Faber, "under Ortogrul, gained their first victory over the Greek empire in

the year 1261, by the conquest of Cutahi; in the year 1357, they crossed over into Europe: in the year 1453, they took Constantinople; and the remaining provinces of the empire soon followed the fate of the capital: in the year 1669, they made themselves masters of Crete: and in the year 1672, they wrested Cameniec, their last conquest from the Poles."

3. *The character and consequences of this warfare.*

The besieging armies were an immense multitude —*two hundred thousand thousand.* Mahomet II. had at the siege of Constantinople a fleet of two hundred and thirty sail, and an army of four hundred thousand men to co-operate with his naval force. A very great proportion of this army was cavalry.

The horsemen appeared in vision as if they had *breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone.*

The colour of fire is red, that of jacinth, or hyacinth, blue, and of brimstone yellow: and this, said Mr. Daubuz, "had a literal accomplishment: for the Ottomans, from the first time of their appearance, have affected to wear such warlike apparel of scarlet, blue, and yellow." *The heads of their horses were as the heads of lions,* to denote their strength, their courage, and their fierceness. *Out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone,* which destroyed the men that opposed them. This refers to the terrible mode of warfare (unknown indeed at the time of the prediction,) which was introduced under the sixth trumpet, and hath since been practised extensively among the nations which are called civil-

ized—the destruction produced by gunpowder. The artillery employed by Mahomet the son of Amurath, at the siege of Constantinople, was of astonishing size, and produced upon the walls of that proud city a corresponding effect. One of these great guns is said to have been drawn by seventy yoke of oxen, and to have discharged rocks of three hundred pounds weight.

The army under consideration bore in some things a striking resemblance to the Saracenic locusts. *They had tails like unto serpents, and had power to do hurt* by their tails. The wild and raging fanaticism which animated these ferocious Mahometans followed them wheresoever they went. Their soul-destroying religion was propagated with unabating zeal, and daring cruelty; and they triumphed alike over the persons and the principles of all that opposed them. The BIBLE was torn from the hands of the degenerate Christians, and committed before their eyes to the flames; and they were themselves compelled throughout the extent of the empire to do homage to the KORAN.

The consequences were not salutary, or such as indicated reformation among those who still remained in the profession of the Christian faith, either in Europe or in Asia. The idolatries, the heresies, the immoralities, and the gross superstition, which provoked the divine indignation against those who perverted the gospel of God were still adhered to with persevering obstinacy. Mercy had been abused, and even judgments were unprofitable to a graceless people. *The rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their*

hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

The Greek church fell with the Constantinopolitan empire. It was first in the transgression, and it first received its doom. The Latin Roman church refused to take warning by the wo of the sixth trumpet; and still persists in its impious league with *the beast with ten horns.* The *third wo,* or *seventh trumpet,* puts a period to the whole system of iniquity; but the consideration of this judgment must for the present be postponed. The time of the seventh trumpet falls within the third great prophetical period which we have designated the *period of the vials.*

Before we proceed to the investigation of the predictions which have reference to it, this lecture must be brought to a close; and we shall do so, with the following reflections.

THE CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

respect, *The nature of the Mahometan religion—The progress of the great power which is its principal support*—and *the necessity of carefully distinguishing from every other religion, that personal piety, which, through the faith of the gospel, prepares for eternal life.*

1. *The Mahometan Religion.*

The creed of the Mussulman is essentially the same with that of the Socinians, which they pre-

sumptuously denominate UNITARIAN, as if they alone worshipped one God. The coincidence between the religion of the *Mahometan*, and that of the modern *Socinians*, has been distinctly perceived by respectable writers of different countries, and has been acknowledged by Socinians themselves.* Professing

* The learned Hottinger, *Historia Orientalis*, compares the doctrines of both these systems together, and points out their coincidence. The Dean of Norwich has not omitted making the same remark; and Dr. Magee, the author of a very learned, acute, and instructive work, on the subject of *the Scriptural Atonement and Sacrifice*, illustrates an assertion of a similar import, by a note which I take the liberty of laying before my readers at full length.

"It deserves to be noticed, that a complacency for the religion of Mahomet, is a character by which the liberality of the Socinian or *Unitarian* is not less distinguished than that of the *Deist*. The reason assigned for this by Mr. Van Mildert is a just one. Mahometanism is admired by both, because it sets aside those distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, the *divinity of Christ*, and the *sacrifice upon the cross;* and prepares the way for what the latter are pleased to dignify with the title of Natural Religion, and the former with that of Rational Christianity.—*Van Mildert's Boyle Lect.* vol. i. p. 208. The same writer also truly remarks, (p. 202.) that, besides exhibiting a strange compound of Heathen and Jewish errors, the code of Mahomet comprizes almost every heterodox opinion that has ever been entertained respecting the Christian faith.

Indeed, the decided part which the Unitarians have heretofore taken with the prophet of Mecca, seems not to be sufficiently adverted to at the present day. The curious reader, if he will turn to *Mr. Leslie's Theolog. Works*, vol. i. p. 207. will not be a little entertained to see conveyed, in a solemn address from the English Unitarians to the Mahometan ambassador of Morocco, in the reign of Charles the second, a cordial approbation of Mahomet and the Koran. The one is said to have been raised up by God to scourge the idolizing Christians, whilst the other is spoken of as a precious record of the true faith. Mahomet they represent to be "a preacher of the gospel of Christ;" and they describe themselves to be his "fellow-champions for the truth." The mode of warfare they admit,

reverence for the christian scriptures, *these Unitarians* quote them, reject them, and pervert them, at pleasure; and pretend to found upon them their own incoherent and impious dogmas.

indeed, to be different; but the object contended for they assert to be the same. "We, with our Unitarian brethren, have been in all ages exercised to defend with our pens the faith of one supreme God; as *he hath raised your Mahomet to do the same with the sword*, as a scourge on those idolizing Christians." (p. 209.) Leslie, upon a full and deliberate view of the case, admits the justice of the claim set up by the Unitarians to be admitted to rank with the followers of Mahomet; pronouncing the one to have as good a title to the appellation of Christians as the other. (p. 337.) On a disclosure by Mr. Leslie, of the attempt which had thus been made by the Socinians, to form a confederacy with the Mahometans, the authenticity of the address, and the plan of the projected coalition at the time were strenuously denied. The truth of Mr. Leslie's statement, however, (of which from the character of the man no doubt could well have been at any time entertained,) has been since most fully and incontrovertibly confirmed.—See *Whitaker's Origin of Arianism*, p. 399. Mr. Leslie also shows, that this Unitarian scheme of extolling Mahometanism as the only true Christianity, continued for a length of time to be acted on with activity and perseverance. He establishes this at large, by extracts from certain of their publications, in which it is endeavoured to prove, "that Mahomet had no other design but to restore the belief of the Unity of God, which at that time was extirpated among the Eastern Christians by the doctrines of the *Trinity* and *Incarnation:* that Mahomet meant not, that his religion should be esteemed a new religion, but only the restitution of the true intent of the Christian religion: that the Mahometan learned men call themselves the true disciples of the Messias;" and, to crown all, "that Mahometanism has prevailed so greatly, *not by force and the sword,—but by that one truth in the Koran, the Unity of God.*" And, as a just consequence from all this, it is strongly contended, that "the Turks had acted more rationally in embracing the sect of Mahomet, than the Christian faith of the Trinity, Incarnation," &c. *Leslie*, [illegible] i.

The impostor of Mecca admitted the divine origin of both the Old and the New Testament, and gave out that they both predicted his own mission, as superior to Moses, and even to Jesus Christ. In the sixty-first chapter, the KORAN has these words, "Remember that Jesus the Son of Mary said to the children of Israel, I am the messenger of God; he hath sent me to confirm the Old Testament, and to declare unto you, that there shall come a prophet after me, whose name shall be Mahomet."* Four texts of scripture are employed to prove that the son of Abdallah was a teacher sent from God, Deut. xxxiii. 2. Psa. l. 2. Isa. xxi. 7. John xvi. 7. I shall not however, take up your time by repeating the argument or the criticism upon these passages. There is none of you in danger of taking Mahomet for the *Comforter*.

As the Mahometan system rejects the idea of an atonement, and of the sinner's total and original depravity, it entirely discards the doctrine of the Trinity, and the divinity of Jesus Christ. There is of course no place in this system for regeneration or sanctification, in the christian acceptation of these terms.

Friday is the Sabbath of the Moslem, because, they say, God on that day created man. Prayer and fasting, and alms-giving, are the principal ordi-

pp. 216, 217. *Magee on Atonement*, p. 85. New-York Ed. 1813. Did worldly policy answer, there can be no doubt that Unitarians would rather bear the name of Mahomet than of Socinus, and would prefer the Koran to the best system of christian theology.

* Prideaux's Life of Mahomet, p. 110. London, 1808.

nances of religion, except a pilgrimage to Mecca, which is required expressly from every Mussulman once in his life. The doctrine of fatalism is derived by Mahomet from the divine decrees; religion is to be propagated by the sword rather than by argument; and the heaven of the false prophet is modelled, according to his own brutal appetite for the female sex, into a place of sensual gratification.

It has been much disputed whether he was a fanatic or a deceiver; but there is no ground for such disputation. He was both. He was enthusiastically ambitious. He *believed* probably in many falsehoods; and he *contrived* others to carry his own purposes into effect. Many indeed are the contradictions of his Koran; and all admit that much of his pretended revelation was published in order to cover the crimes he had previously committed. His apologist, Mr. Gibbon, cannot deny what he endeavours to palliate. "In his private conduct Mahomet indulged the appetites of a man, and abused the claims of a prophet. A special revelation dispensed him from the laws which he had imposed on his nation; the female sex, without reserve, was abandoned to his desires; and this singular prerogative excited the envy, rather than the scandal, the veneration, rather than the envy, of the devout Mussulman."*

Dean Prideaux, with his characteristic industry and good sense, examines this religion; compares its claims with those of christianity upon our faith; and proves it an imposture.

* Hist. Dec. Vol. VI. p. 291. Phil. 1805.

The marks of an imposture which this writer gives deserve to be held in remembrance. They may with propriety in other cases also answer as a criterion by which we may try the conduct of men. They are illustrated in his letter to the Deists, annexed to his Life of Mahomet.

Such, Christians, is the nature of that cruel and carnal religion which has been forced upon millions of the human family by the sword of a barbarous and fanatical foe; which fell as a wo by the just judgments of God upon a corrupt church and empire; which triumphed effectually over the proud battlements of Constantinople; and which holds in ignorance and bondage until this day a sixth part of the inhabitants of the earth.

2. *The progress of the great power*, which is at present the principal support of Mahometan delusion, deserves attention, as the 1260 years of its prevalence against true religion are drawing near an end.*

Having spread generally through the east under the empire of the Saracens, according to the predictions of the *fifth trumpet*, the first wo, it was by the success of the Ottoman Turks the religion of Mahomet became established throughout the vast extent of the Christian empire of the eastern Cesars.

The Turks originally occupied the high lands of Siberia, now occupied by the Tartars and Calmucks, extending from Caf, or Immaus, to Mount Atlas, being, probably the centre and the summit of Asia. They

* I shall hereafter show the justness of this computation.

were the most contemptible of the slaves, working the iron forges of the great Khan of Geougen. At first a ferocious and lawless race, they soon enslaved, under the auspices of an upstart leader, their former masters, and became a terror to the surrounding nations. Roman history takes notice of them as early as the age of Pliny; and six hundred years before the Ottoman power was known, they were a terror not only to the Chinese, but also to the Greek Roman empire. Spreading to the south, several tribes of the Turks became subject to the Saracenic empire; and the Caliph Motassem had in the ninth century upwards of fifty thousand Turkish youth educated in the Mahometan religion as the guards of his capital. The progress of the Turks is rapidly sketched with a masterly hand in the following sentence, which I quote from a well-known historian. "Their Scythian empire of the sixth century was long since dissolved; but the name was still famous among the Greeks and Orientals; and the fragments of the nation, each a powerful and independent people, were scattered over the desert from China to the Oxus and the Danube; the colony of Hungarians was admitted into the republic of Europe, and the thrones of Asia were occupied by slaves and soldiers of Turkish extraction. While Apulia and Sicily were subdued by the Norman lance, a swarm of these northern shepherds overspread the kingdoms of Persia: their princes of the race of Seljuk, erected a splendid and solid empire from Samarcam to the confines of Greece and Egypt; and the Turks have maintained their dominion in Asia Minor, till the vic-

torious crescent has been planted on the dome of St. Sophia."* In the space of twenty-five years, from 1055 to 1080, Togrul Beg, Ducas, Melech, and Cutlu Muses, and his son, erected four distinct sultanies in the regions watered by the Euphrates, and fixed their respective thrones in Bagdad, Damascus, Aleppo, and Iconium. Confined to their own country, as *bound angels*, it was not until some hundred years thereafter, the Turks, who had been previously united under *Othman*, the founder of the OTTOMAN EMPIRE, were let loose to invade the dominions of the Greek Christians. That power, since the present commotions of modern Europe have commenced, appears rapidly on the decline, and it continues to exist only by the jealousies which vainly strive to preserve the balance of empire in the great commonwealth of civilized nations.

3. Let us in reviewing this fanaticism, *learn to distinguish true religion* from every other system.

Scepticism often proceeds from the contemplation of the numerous and disorderly sectaries which make a pretension to real religion; because, the understanding is amazed, and the moral sense is hardened, at the sight of so many extravagancies and delusions, as have from time to time distracted the nations and the churches of the world. Every religion proposes to make man happy in the worship of a superior being. The christian religion alone teaches that the sinner cannot have friendship with God, but in a

* Hist. Dec. and Fall, Vol. VII. p. 157.

Divine Mediator, upon the footing of a perfectly satisfactory atonement. This, brethren, is its essential characteristic. In order to be, even in theory, a true Christian, it is indispensably necessary to believe that every sinner is, in himself considered, justly condemned to everlasting punishment; that Jesus Christ has made perfect satisfaction to divine justice for the sins of men; and that justice not only admits, but requires, that every sinner who is united by grace to Jesus Christ in the new covenant, shall, being in Christ, be saved with an everlasting salvation. To be a Christian, not merely in theory, but in fact, is to be thus united by a living faith to the only Redeemer of God's elect.

Such are the Christians who profit by the sorrows of life; who seek the glory of their Father and their God; who are unhurt by the trumpet of wo; and who, under the sound of the glorious gospel, march to conquest and to triumph. *There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them* WHICH ARE IN CHRIST *Jesus.* AMEN.

THE SEVENTH TRUMPET,

OR,

THIRD WO.

LECTURE VII.

Rev. xi. 14—19....*The second wo is past; and behold, the third wo cometh quickly: And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. And the temple of God was opened in*

heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

"TO propose maxims of civil polity," said the very eloquent Saurin, in his discourse on the words of Solomon, Prov. xiv. 34. *Righteousness exalteth a nation,* "to propose maxims of civil polity in a religious assembly, to propose maxims of religion in a political assembly, are two things, which seem alike senseless and imprudent. The Christian is so often distinguished from the statesman, that it would seem they are opposite characters."

If the pastor of the French church at the Hague, thus spoke to his audience in the beginning of the last century,* he would have no reason to alter his opinion had he been now in the nineteenth century addressing an American assembly. In this country, where every one is a politician, and few are religious, the sentiments of the many predominate. The politics of every man influences his religion; religion has little influence on politics. This political degradation of christianity is not however peculiar to the United States; it is universally prevalent among the nations of christendom. Here, indeed, the general opinion is, that religion is no fit subject of *political* consideration, civil polity is no fit subject of *religious* consideration: but in other countries, the state has intermeddled with christianity in order to degrade *religion* itself under pretence of establish-

* 1706.

ing the *church;* and the priests have sold the Christians' rights and liberties to the reigning authorities.

This state of things was both foreseen and foretold by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Author of our religion, and the Governor of all the nations of the earth. The awful *consequences* of such a state were also predicted, together with the *period* of time when a happy change should be effected—Wo, Wo, Wo, *to the inhabiters of the earth*, in consequence of their abuse of christianity. *But, in the days of the voice of the seventh angel,* THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD ARE BECOME THE KINGDOMS OF OUR LORD AND OF HIS CHRIST.

THE SEVENTH TRUMPET

being now under consideration, we shall endeavour to settle the question respecting its chronology—unfold the contents of its predictions—and make some appropriate animadversions.

The period of the trumpets, it has been already shown, commenced at the close of that of the seals, or rather at the opening of the seventh seal, in the fourth century;* and the object of the judgments announced by the trumpets, is the Roman empire, the FOURTH BEAST of prophecy, degrading the Christian religion into a corrupt system interwoven with its own tyrannical polity.† The *first four* trumpets accomplished the overthrow of ancient Rome, by the complete dismemberment of the *western* empire of the Cesars. The *fifth* tormented, and the *sixth* destroyed the *Greek* empire, leaving the Otto-

* Page 117—125. † Page 120—122.

man power in possession of the throne of Constantinople.* These two are wo trumpets as well as that one which is the theme of the present discourse. Early in the seventh century, the first wo was sounded, and the judgment commenced in 612. The torments inflicted upon the adjacent nations for 150 years were peculiarly great; but the Saracenic conquests were suspended in 762. The remote effects of the first wo, still, nevertheless, continue. The destructive period of the Euphratean horsemen commenced in the year 1281, and, continuing for 391 years, terminated in 1672. About six hundred years of confusion intervened between the first and the second wo; but the time between the second and the third, between the year 1672 and the sounding of the seventh trumpet, is comparatively short. This is evident from inspection of the sacred text, and we, accordingly, proceed to show,

I. *The time of the third wo.*

In settling the chronological question, we shall lay before you,

1. The argument from verse 14. *The second wo is past; and, behold, the third wo cometh quickly.*] Several valuable expositors have been misled by an improper interpretation of the expression, *the second wo is past.* It being understood by some, to signify merely, that the hieroglyphical representation, to John the Divine, had passed before the representation of the second wo appeared, they of course date the *third* wo soon after the second, without al-

* See preceding Lecture.

lowing time for the 391 years to be expended. Others, upon the contrary, imagining that the *power*, by which the second wo was inflicted, must become *extinct* before the *third* wo commences, postpone the period of the seventh trumpet until the final overthrow of the Ottoman empire. Both are certainly mistaken. The assertion, *the second wo is past*, does not respect the existence of the power which inflicts; but of the judgment itself inflicted, during the specified time of 391 years, upon the Greek Christian empire. It was not of the VISION it was said, *it is past;* but of the wo which was represented in vision. It was therefore in the year 1672, that the second wo was in fact past.

The text assures us that *the third wo cometh quickly* after this year. Ταχυ, the Greek word rendered quickly, must be understood comparatively. *Swift* and *slow*, although in what Grammarians denominate the positive form, have nevertheless a comparative signification. A swift horse, a sharp instrument, a great man, are expressions which necessarily imply comparison, although the adjective is not in what is called the comparative degree: and in each instance the comparison is confined to objects of a like kind. Ταχυ must be explained upon this principle. It must be understood *comparatively*, and the *comparison* must be with the other wo trumpets already expounded.

It is also disputed, whether the celerity implied in the words, "cometh quickly," is ascribed to the time intervening between the second and third wo, or to the time in which this wo itself is in fact, inflicted. I see no reason for denying its application to both; and therefore conclude that the third wo fol-

lows the second in much quicker succession than the second did the first, and that the judgment which it inflicts is more speedy in its execution than either of the former two.

At the conclusion of the first wo it was said, Chap. ix. 12. *There come two woes more* HEREAFTER; but in this case it is said, *the third wo cometh* QUICKLY. We are thus given to understand that a considerable space of time would intervene between the fifth and the sixth trumpet: and but a short space between the sixth and the seventh.

Now as these trumpets occupied, the one a period of 150 years, and the other a period of nearly 400, the intervening period, in order to be comparatively great, should exceed any of those numbers. We find, accordingly, that it was in fact upwards of 500 years. But, the third wo, or seventh trumpet, approaches with comparative celerity. The intervening time will not probably exceed 150 years; and the tremendous judgment which the last wo brings, will execute its purposes in a much shorter space of time.

These considerations would lead us to expect, even independently of what our eyes have seen, and our ears have heard, some terrible scourge to the apostate nations about the period in which we live. I shall not at present speak more pointedly: but,

2. Proceed by another train of reasoning to ascertain the period of the seventh trumpet.

You will have observed at the time of my reading this text, that I passed over a large and very inter-

esting portion of the Apocalypse—the whole tenth chapter, and the greater part of the eleventh.

Every attentive reader will readily perceive that the seventh trumpet is separated from the preceding trumpets by a great deal of other matter in the actual arrangement of the book of Revelation. This is the more worthy of notice, because it is a singular instance of deviation from what we may call the natural order. The seven epistles to the Asian churches follow one another in regular succession, and without interruption. The seven seals are opened in similar order, and no foreign event is introduced to unsettle or distract the chronology. The first six trumpets proceed the one after the other in the same order in the written revelation, which the events predicted followed in their accomplishment. The seven vials are poured out in the same manner; and the account of them in the xvith chapter, is not interrupted by any other narrative. The suspension of the history of the woes, which takes place between the second and the third, is therefore evidently without a parallel. Nor is this fact owing to the intervening length of time; for the one follows the other, as we have already seen, with comparative celerity. The interposition of the seventh chapter between the narrative of the sixth and of the seventh seal, is not at all a case of the same description. That which is foretold in that chapter really belongs to the very time at which it is introduced. The four angels who stayed the winds of heaven, and the act of the angel sealing, among the twelve tribes of Israel, the true servants of the living God, both belong to the age of Constantine and his

three sons; and were the means of preserving from the prevalent corruptions of religion, the actual church of Christ. It is quite otherwise in the case under consideration. The eleventh chapter, from the beginning to the fourteenth verse, introduces a subject quite distinct from the history of the trumpets; and gives in a compendious form the prospective history of a much greater period than that of the sixth and seventh trumpets taken together—a period of 1260 years. There must be a satisfactory reason for this singular fact. Wisdom is justified of her children; and we proceed to lay the reason before you.

The object of all the trumpets is, the punishment and demolition of the great Roman empire, the *fourth beast* of Daniel's prophecy. This object had, in fact, been effected under the *first four* trumpets, so far as it respected the Latin imperial power, by the complete dismemberment of the *western* empire; and as it respected the eastern empire, the object had been fully accomplished in the judgments of the two succeeding trumpets. What then remained for the seventh trumpet? Is the *third wo* without an object? Must we violate the principle of homogeneity in the interpretation of these judgments?

These questions are of easy solution. History sheds a light upon the prophecy. It lays the facts before us; and there is wanting only judgment to make the application. The Roman empire still exists, although in a divided state. Both in name and in character, it is found in Europe, even after the second wo destroyed the Greek empire in 1672. The Emperor of Germany has long claimed and received the title of Head of the holy Roman empire; and

the several governments within the geographical boundaries of the Latin empire, are still of that description which requires judgments, and merits wo. Their civil establishments are without exception a complex system of tyranny and corrupt Christianity.

As the object of the trumpets is homogeneous, no sooner was the western throne of the Cesars overthrown, than they proceeded in chronological order to the demolition of the Greek empire. While that work is progressing, the *beast* reappears in the west: his deadly wound is healed: he reassumes his warfare against the saints with *ten distinct horns*, or separate kingdoms: he strives to silence in death all the *witnesses* that give testimony for the true religion against his corruptions: and long before the sixth trumpet had established the Ottoman power upon the throne of Constantine the Great, the object of the third wo was presented in the west to the angel who held, by the appointment of God, the seventh trumpet.

It was necessary, therefore, that the Apocalypse should interrupt, for a little, the prophetic narrative of the seven trumpets, in order to introduce to view that system which arose during the execution of other judgments, as the object of the wo announced by the sounding of the last trumpet.

The whole of Chap. x. and xi. 1—13. may be considered as parenthetical; and it would have greatly facilitated the exertions of the reader to understand the subject, had this been attended to by those who divided the bible into chapters. The narrative of the trumpets proceeds from the close of chap. ix. to chap. xi. 14. the paragraph which constitutes the text under discussion.

From this train of reasoning, it appears that the antichristian Roman empire is the object of the third wo. That empire still stands; and of course this judgment is not past. But it cannot stand longer than 1260 years from the rise of the "*man of sin*," in the year 606;* and this consideration restricts the period of the third wo to the age in which we live.

3. There is conclusive evidence, furnished in the text itself, that the period of the seventh trumpet is that which ushers in the Millennium. Verse 15. *And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.*] The church is thus represented as rejoicing—"Great voices are heard in heaven."—She has cause of joy. The occasion is novel indeed. Since the captivity of Judah, about 588 years before the Christian era, until the present day, scarcely an instance has occurred in the whole history of nations, of a kingdom or commonwealth regulating their polity upon pure scriptural principles. Many nations, it is true, have pretended to be Christian. And religion has been scandalized by their unholy interference. Many Christians have also been deceived, and misled into a belief, that the kingdoms of the nations were so constituted as to merit their conscientious acquiescence, and pious support: but the Prince of the kings of the earth, who gave this revelation to his servant John, teaches us, that now for the first time, the kingdoms of this world ARE BECOME the kingdoms of God and of Christ. Heretofore, they have

* This shall be shown in its place.

been *thrones of iniquity, having no fellowship with God,** characterized as *beasts* and *horns* of beasts, both by Daniel and the writer of the Apocalypse. Servants, and admirers, and apologists, and eulogists, they have had in abundance, but there was not a voice in heaven raised in their commendation. They were to be feared, but not approved, by the saints of the Most High. Now, indeed, this last wo produces an effectual change. The powers of this world perish in his wrath: the kingdoms are become what they ought to be: and the voice of the church is raised in approbation of the salutary alteration. The seventh trumpet, so far as respects its concluding judgments, synchronizes with the seventh vial.

THIRD AND LAST WO.

Seventh Trumpet.	*Seventh Vial.*
XI. 15. And there were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.	XVI. 17. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven from the throne, saying, it is done.
19. And there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.	18. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake.
	21. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven.

* Psa. xciv 20.

It is by no means, however, upon the mere coincidence of expressions, that we rest the assertion that the last trumpet is so far cotemporary with the last vial; but upon the fact that each of these judgments is represented in its place as introducing the millennium. This is unquestionably the case with the last of the vials, as shall be shown in due time; and I have laid my reasons before you for affirming the same of the last trumpet. Respect for very valuable expositors, from whom I, in this interpretation, find cause of dissent, demands that I should take notice of their opinions before I proceed to the second branch of this discourse.

These opinions are very numerous and various; but I do not propose to enter upon a discussion of them all. I am supported in the assertion of the coincidence of the seventh trumpet with the seventh vial, by Lord Napier, Sir Isaac Newton, Mede, Brown, Whitaker, Johnston, and many other respectable expositors. These gentlemen differ, however, among themselves, as to the period to which both the judgments apply; and by none of them have the principles which have determined my mind, and which I have laid before you, been exhibited to view. Durham, Lowman, Priestley, Reader, Frazer, bishop Newton, and Mr. Faber, together with several others, have endeavoured to prove that the seventh trumpet comprehends all the vials; and they too, differ from one another as to the period of time to which the prophecy has respect. Mr. Lowman fixes the date of the seventh trumpet before the termination of the eighth century, and Mr. Faber places it

at the commencement of the French revolution, toward the close of the eighteenth.

The arguments which are employed to prove that the seventh trumpet comprehends all the seven vials, are all capable of being reduced to the two following—The argument from analogy—and that from parallel scriptural expressions.

1. The argument from analogy.

"As there are three great distinct apocalyptical periods, the seals—the trumpets—and the vials, all marked by the symbolical number *seven*, and as the trumpets are all included in the seventh seal, it is inferred that the vials must be all included in the seventh trumpet."

My reply to this argument is, that the analogy fails; because as the sealed book must of necessity contain under the seventh seal whatsoever in the system of prophecy was not unfolded in the preceding, so the events of the trumpets being subsequent to those predicted under the first six seals, could not, if in the book at all, be made known until the seventh seal was removed from the part of the book which contained them. Therefore we are told expressly, that when he opened the *seventh* seal, seven angels received the trumpets, viii. 1, 2.

But there is no necessity for placing any, or all the vials, under any one trumpet whatever. In the book, every event *must* be; but under the trumpets, there is no necessity for placing any event not expressly assigned to them. There is besides a straining, if

not an abuse, of symbolical language, in representing the cases as parallel.

It is also to be observed, that as the object of the seals was the Pagan empire, and that of the trumpets the Christian empire, both in the west and the east; the trumpets could not in fact sound until after the sixth seal had abolished Pagan power: but as the object of the vials is the Latin Roman empire, in its state of apostacy; as this system of iniquity arose before the fifth and sixth vials had accomplished the downfal of the eastern empire, there is no necessity for waiting until that period, for inflicting some of the judgments of heaven upon the antichristian system.

2. The argument from certain scriptural expressions.

There are to be found in chap. x. verses 3, 4. compared with verse 7. *Seven thunders uttered their voices —Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished.* And in chap. xv. i. *Seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them is filled up the wrath of God.*

It is alleged by bishop Newton, and in this he is followed by Mr. Faber, "that the seventh trumpet is the *last* wo; that the seven vials are the *last* plagues; and therefore must synchronize with the *last* wo; that the seven thunders belong to the seventh trumpet, and are synonymous with the seven vials; and, there-

fore, that the seven vials must come under the seventh trumpet." This, if I understand it, is the sum of the argument. With deference to the eminent expositors who rest their cause upon it, however, I cannot hesitate in saying, that it is illogically constructed, and altogether inconclusive.

1. It is a gratuitous hypothesis, that the seven thunders are the seven vials. Assuredly, there is no similitude between the symbols. Why should a clap of thunder be said without proof to be the same with a *cup?* Would it not be as reasonable to suppose that these seven thunders are those which were heard, xvi. 18. in consequence of the pouring out of the *seventh* vial, and are identified with the thunderings, xi. 19. of the seventh trumpet?

2. In the seven vials, *is filled up the wrath of God*, and I see no propriety in confining them all to the third wo. If the phrase, "*filled up*," signifies, *comprehended*, it is impossible to affirm that the third wo exclusively contained divine wrath. Every wo, every trumpet, had its share. But if the phrase signifies *completed*, then it is no more limited, in correct application to the last trumpet, than to the last vial. The criticism which restricts its application to the *last* in one instance, will restrict it to the *last* in the other.

3. There is no propriety in the remark, that if the last plagues do not coincide with the last wo, then there are *last*, and *more* last, &c. which is absurd.

This is trifling with sacred things. It is sporting with the words of truth. Follow up the criticism, and see how it will apply. There are *seven last* plagues inflicted in regular succession. Both bishop Newton and Mr. Faber acknowledge this. There is, therefore, according to the text, the *first* last plague, and the *second* last plague, and the *third* last plague, &c. &c.

It is obvious to every one, that the words, "*last plagues*," and "*is filled up the wrath of God*," are not to be taken absolutely, but relatively. They cannot be true absolutely, because the judgments to which they apply are not, in fact, the *last* or the *only* judgments. There are subsequent judgments undoubtedly inflicted on Gog and Magog; and there are judgments inflicted subsequent to these, and to all that can be inflicted in this world. There is a DAY OF JUDGMENT, when time itself is come to an end, and there is *wrath in hell.* Mr. Faber ought therefore to have spared his criticism on Mr. Whitaker. It is unworthy of a grave expositor.* *Great men are not always wise.*

The expressions in question are undoubtedly to be understood *relatively:* and they have relation to the antichristian apostacy. The vials are *the plagues* inflicted upon this *last* form of the great *fourth* prophetical *beast.* In them is *filled up the wrath of God,* toward the antichristian usurpation.

The error of commentators upon this subject, consists in their fondness to identify things which are intended in prophecy to be kept distinct. The object

* Vol. II. p. 317. Lond. 1806.

of all the trumpets is *one,* and is different from the object of the vials; and even although in some certain instances, a trumpet and a vial should designate judgments upon one and the same system, it is on different accounts. The object of the trumpets is the Roman empire, *professing* a political species of Christianity: and they affect this empire both in its Latin and Greek dominions. The object of all the vials is also *one*—the antichristian system in the Latin Roman empire. It is true, the sixth and seventh vials, and the last trumpet meet, in judging and punishing the same great complex system of iniquity, preparatory to the millennium: but it is because those two distinct objects are in fact in this instance combined in the abominable and complex establishments which are divinely appointed to destruction. We shall hereafter show more at large that this destruction comes upon these establishments in the course of half a century from the present time.*

* We are *now* entered upon the period of the seventh trumpet. Mr. Faber appears very nearly correct in his chronological statement of this third and last wo. It in fact originated in the commotions of the French revolution; and Napolean Buonaparte is the principal agent of Providence hitherto employed in this work of judgment. In this I entirely agree with that expositor, however far he has mistaken the time of the vials. "It has been our lot," says he, vol. ii. p. 313, "to hear the voice of the third wo, and to behold in the French revolution the dreadful scenes of the harvest," p. 317. We have likewise seen, that the third wo came quickly in the year 1792, when the reign of Gallic liberty and equality commenced. Then it was that the voice of the seventh angel, or the third wo angel, began to be heard."

II. *We shall explain the predictions of the seventh trumpet.*

These predictions respect the *grand design* of the wo—the *joy* which the accomplishment of that design produces—and the *means* employed in bringing it to pass.

1. The great end accomplished is, the general reformation of the nations of the earth.

Verse 15. *The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.*] The existing sovereignties of nations constitute the subject of this prediction. *The kingdoms of this world,* are the political constitutions which are on earth, and which have derived their form and character from the men of the world: and particularly the several kingdoms which are found within the precincts of the old Roman empire. The reformation which they undergo changes effectually their character. They become *the kingdoms of our Lord.* They *were,* heretofore, *of this world,* of the *earth,* earthy: but now, they *are of the Lord.* They were always in fact, though unknowingly and unwillingly, under the power of Jehovah, and made subservient to Jesus Christ: but they are now professedly and with understanding subject to the law of God, and the revelation of Jesus Christ. True religion now comes to be formally avowed by them in their political capacity. There were Christians residing in these nations before this

time: the nations were actually *called* Christian nations: some really *supposed* that they were Christian states: many *pretended* that they were so: but during all this time, they have been in the estimation of our Lord Jesus Christ, only "kingdoms of this world." Now however they understand, they profess, and they support, not a state religion, nor a worldly sanctuary, but the pure religion of the Bible, in a consistent manner.

The system of revealed truth for the first time influences their whole social relations, and directs their polity: and they publicly proclaim their submission to Messiah. They are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. They acknowledge him as their Governor; and he shall reign over them continually. Wonderful, and unto many, unexpected change! But the power of our Redeemer over the nations shall never afterwards be called in question by his disciples. *He shall reign for ever and ever.*

I conclude this part of my exposition in the words of Dr. Johnston. "This trumpet which brings the last wo upon the Roman empire, (the inhabiters of the earth,) brings praise and triumph to heaven, the church of Christ. 'For there were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.' Then Christians in the church of Christ shall lift up their voices aloud, and in triumph proclaim the purity, prosperity, and extent of Christ's spiritual kingdom, in such a manner that no part of the world shall be ignorant of the proclamation, or willing and able to gainsay

it. Then all the kingdoms which Daniel foretold should arise and fall in the world before the kingdom of Christ should extend over the whole world, shall have fallen, and that kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, which is not meat and drink, but truth, and righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, shall extend over the whole earth. *Then all the particular kingdoms and churches which shall be erected in the world, for the civil and religious government of men in society, shall be formed on these principles of truth, righteousness, peace, and joy, which form the constitution of the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.* From that time forth, so long as this world stands, Christ's church shall reign in triumph; no kingdom shall again rise up to persecute and oppress it with success, as Rome, Heathen and Papal, had done before that period, and its purity and triumph shall be for ever and ever in the heavenly world."

2. The seventh trumpet predicts *great joy*, for the general reformation consequent upon the third wo.

Verses 16, 17. *And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.*]

They who returned thanks in this solemn manner to the Almighty, and so expressed their joy at the

remarkable event now come to pass, are *the collective body of faithful men* in the church of Christ—"the four and twenty elders."* These fell upon their faces before the throne of God; and in humble acknowledgment of his sparing mercy to themselves, as well as in grateful adoration of his justice in the punishment of his and their enemies, they worship him in spirit and in truth.

The terrible scenes of the *third wo*, with all the barbarities which have been consequent upon the French Revolution, are by no means in themselves cause of joy and thanksgiving. When therefore the saints are said to rejoice in them, it is because these judgments are in the providence of God introductory to the millennium. It is in the birth of the child, and not in the pangs of travail, that the parents and the friends rejoice. It is on account of their effects that the saints are required to rejoice in the judgments of God upon the nations of the earth; and therefore do they rejoice. Psa. xcvii. 8. Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced, because of thy *judgments*, O LORD. To those pious men who do not suffer themselves by interest, by prejudice, or by partialities, to become blind to the immoral character of the kingdoms of this world, it is certainly gratifying to witness the period of their overthrow; to live to see, in these overturnings, the answer of many prayers; and to have laid before their eyes, those miracles which confirm their faith in the sacred predictions, and in the

* This symbolical expression has been heretofore explained. The reader is referred to page 58.

infinite perfections of their God: for in the light of miracles the fulfilment of prophecy ought uniformly to be contemplated. It is with high ecstacy that this very period of the world will, a few years hence, be celebrated according to the text now under discussion. "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty; because *thou hast taken to thee thy great power*, and hast reigned."

"This interposition," said Dr. Johnston, "This interposition of God in establishing Christ's kingdom over the whole world is called *his great power*, that is, in the symbolical language, the exertions of his power in favour of the church of Christ, of which all his former exertions were only types. However great, gracious, and many, have been the exertions of divine power in favour of the church of Christ, all these shall not only be greatly exceeded by that one which shall overthrow Antichrist, bind Satan, and establish and perpetuate the reign of truth, righteousness, peace, and joy, over the whole earth, but by that one, their true intention, and the hand that performed them, shall be rendered much more visible than they were before that period. Then the kingdom of God shall come, and it shall then be evident that his is the power which hath brought about that period, and that the whole shall illustriously display his glory."

3. The means employed in executing the wo, and in bringing about that great and desirable event, the millennium, are not very particularly described. Hurried on, to the most pleasant part of the scenery exposed to view after the sounding of the seventh

trumpet, it is only in the concluding sentence that the apostle takes notice of the judgments. These same events too, were afterwards to be introduced to view in another part of the prophetical history, of the same period; and in such connexion as requires more attention to the instruments employed in executing the *wrath of God.*

Moreover, the seventh trumpet, though, in the first instance, announcing wo *to the inhabiters of the symbolical earth*, and bringing down upon them *swift* destruction, has a reference to the subsequent changes which take place in the moral world, until the day of final retribution; and, on that account, we cannot describe the events of this trumpet as comprehended in the *second grand period*, designated the PERIOD OF THE TRUMPETS. The period of the seals embraces only the first six; for the seventh seal comprehends all time: and the period of the trumpets for the same reason comprehends only the first six trumpets.*

I quote an excellent paragraph from bishop Newton, to show, that I am not singular in this sentiment. "At the sounding of the seventh trumpet, (ver. 15.) *the third wo* commenceth, which is rather implied than expressed, as it will be described more fully hereafter. *The third wo* brought *on the inhabiters of the earth* is the ruin and downfal of the antichristian kingdom: and then, and not till then, according to the heavenly chorus, *the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.* St. John is rapt and hurried away as it were to a view of the happy millennium, without considering the steps preceding and conducting to it. At the same time *the four and twenty elders*, or the ministers * of the church, (ver. 16, 17, 18.) are represented as praising and glorifying God for manifesting his

* He ought to have said *members.*

Verse 18. *And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.*]

This is a part of the eucharistic hymn of the twenty-four elders, who represent the whole church of God. Considering the power of God displayed in executing judgments on the antichristian beast, and in the establishment of the millennium, they look forward through succeeding ages to that day which is emphatically the day of the Lord—*the final judgment.* Having celebrated, verse 15—17. the period

power and *kingdom* more than he had done before; and give likewise an intimation of some succeeding events, as *the anger of the nations*, Gog and Magog, (xx. 8.) and *the wrath of God*, displayed in their destruction, (xx. 9.) and *the judging of the dead*, or the general judgment, (xx. 12.) *and the rewarding of all the good, small and great*, as well as *the punishing of the wicked.* Here we have only a summary account of the circumstances and occurrences of the seventh trumpet, but the particulars will be dilated and enlarged upon hereafter.

"And thus are we arrived at the consummation of all things, through a series of prophecies extending from the apostle's days to the end of the world. It is this series which has been our clue to conduct us in our interpretation of these prophecies: and though some of them may be dark and obscure, considered in themselves, yet they receive light and illustration from others preceding and following. All together they are as it were a chain of prophecies, whereof one link depends on, and supports another. If any parts remain yet obscure and unsatisfactory, they may perhaps be cleared up by what the apostle himself hath added by way of explanation."

of the millennium, Period IV.* of our general arrangement; they glance at that of Gog and Magog, Period V. in the words, "*the nations were angry:*" they hasten on to Period VI. "*the time of the dead, when they should be judged:*" and they speak of Period VII. when all accounts being settled, men of every description shall eternally reap the fruit of their doings. Then the righteous shall be happy—"that thou shouldest give reward to thy *servants the prophets*, and to *the saints*, and them that fear thy name *small and great.*" Then also shall the wicked, who by their sins are the destroyers of themselves, and of the countries in which they dwell, suffer eternal death—"*destroy them which destroy the earth.*"

It is only in the 19th verse, the concluding sentence under this trumpet, that the apostle introduces the subject of wo. As soon as the trumpet sounded, he heard the voices of the heavenly inhabitants, and he puts upon record their declarations, before he describes the representations which were made to him, of the judgments which preceded the triumphs.

The vision, however, he must give. Punishment must be inflicted in its time. It is painful, but it is necessary. God is just; and will by no means clear the guilty.

Verse 19. *And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.*] *Heaven* is the symbol for the church of God, which

* See Pages 46, 47.

is frequently expressly called the kingdom of heaven, to denote both the origin and the end of the dispensation of the grace of God to men. In the visible church, at this epoch, the *temple of God* was opened so as to reveal the *ark of the testament.*

"TEMPLUM, (*a tuendo,* Varr. L. L. 6, 2.) a temple, a space in the heavens, for taking omens from the flight of birds, and thence denotes the place where the augur took his seat to make his observations."* The Latin word became of course employed to designate a place dedicated to religious worship—*A sanctuary;* and our English word *temple* is of the same import. It is often used in scripture as synonymous with the house of God, the tabernacle of the Lord, the palace of the Most High. The Hebrews, before the magnificent edifice was built upon Mount Zion by Solomon, did not hesitate to call their principal place of worship, *the temple;*† and afterwards also, they referred to this same splendid building, by the name of *tabernacle.*‡ The *opening of the temple* in heaven, accordingly signifies, that *the means of divine knowledge had become abundant* in the church of Christ.

There was seen in his temple the ark of his testament. God's gracious covenant with man, in the Mediator, Jesus Christ, was set forth by the *ark* which was constructed by Moses, and laid up in the sanctuary. This ארון or Coffer, made of *Shittim* wood, (probably the Arabian Acacia) covered with plates of gold, contained the two tables of the decalogue, which

* Adams's Dictionary. † 1 Sam. i. 9. and iii. 3. Psa. xviii. 6.
‡ Jer. x. 20. Hos. xii. 9.

were miraculously engraven on Mount Sinai. It was upon the cover of this ark, called the mercy-seat, ιλαστηριον, in Greek, and כפרת in Hebrew, that the high priest sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice upon the great day of atonement. It was overspread by the cherubim, and upon it rested the SHEKINAH, the glory of the Lord, from which Jehovah communed with his people Israel. The ark accordingly represented the essential properties of the Christian religion—the mediation of Jesus Christ; atonement for sin by the sacrifice he offered; and communion with God in grace and glory, through him who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

The sacred ark was concealed in the MOST HOLY PLACE, in the temple, from the observation of all except the high priest on the day of atonement. In allusion to this fact; and, in order to indicate a period of increasing christian knowledge, it is said, the temple was opened, and the ark of God revealed.

Cotemporaneously with the terrible wo of the seventh trumpet, *extraordinary efforts are successfully made to render the means of christian knowledge more abundant throughout the earth.*

Now is the time of these wonders. The seed of Jacob are already scattered among the nations, as dew fallen from the vast expanse of heaven, over all lands: the oracles of the living God, rendered into the several languages of the world, are carried over its territories, as the sun going forth from his tabernacle makes his circuit unto the ends of heaven: the herald already stands on the border of every hostile

empire, proclaiming in the name of the great God, peace upon earth, and good will toward men.

At the same time, the political systems, including those religions which are no more than departments of state polity, are in awful commotion. While the temple was opened, and the covenant revealed, *there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.*

These words summarily comprehend all the judgments of the third wo. They do not, it is true, describe minutely, or in detail, the character of the Revolution, or of the agents employed in bringing it to pass: and it may be inferred from this that there is information elsewhere given to supply the deficiency. All that was necessary, under the seventh trumpet itself, to say upon the subject is, that adequate punishment shall be inflicted; the BEAST OF ROME entirely destroyed; and, upon the overthrow of the *fourth* tyrannical empire, the kingdoms of this world shall be new modelled, and settled upon moral principles, and have their social order regulated by the statutes of the Christian religion. As means have been amply furnished for ascertaining the time of the wo, and the same period of time is elsewhere more particularly described, we must rest satisfied, although, in this text, our curiosity is not gratified to its full extent.

The very copious details furnished in the history of the concluding vials will in due time make up for the scantiness of the materials apparent in the present instance: and besides this information, detailed in the three chapters which follow the account of the

seven vials, there is a variety of other means, provided in the Apocalypse, for developing the events of the third wo.

Mr. Faber, however far he may have erred in the view which he has given of the seven vials, judged correctly, in introducing under the seventh trumpet the *harvest* and the *vintage* of God's wrath, as described at the close of the fourteenth chapter.* These two distinct parts of the judgment which shall destroy antichrist, undoubtedly belong to the third wo. And however fancifully the seven vials have been divided by the expositor last mentioned, between the symbolical *harvest* and *vintage*, (a parcelling for which he has given no reason, no sufficient warrant) the historical events are, with much discernment, applied to that era of the judgment, the *period of the harvest*, which alone as yet, is the subject of history. The *vintage*, he justly remarks, is not yet arrived; and with equal propriety, he represents it as synchronizing with the seventh vial: not indeed that the one includes the other; but each is a distinct account of judgments inflicted by the God of heaven, at one and the same time, for the purpose of affecting, though upon distinct principles, the very same object.

In order to finish this part of the discourse, already perhaps too much prolonged, we shall give the history of the events referred to in the third wo.

* I shall show in its proper place, that chap. xi. 1—13. and chapters xii. xiii. xiv. furnish each of them an account of the remarkable 1260 years, and so in part synchronize with this period.

The revival of the imperial power in the *west*, while it was decaying in the *east*, was necessary in order that the seventh trumpet should have an OBJECT upon which its judgments might be inflicted. I quote from Mr. Gibbon evidence of the fact. "The mutual obligations of the popes and the Carlovingian family, form the important link of ancient and modern, of civil and ecclesiastical history. The royal unction of the kings of Israel was dexterously applied: the successor of St. Peter assumed the character of a divine ambassador: a German chieftain was transformed into the Lord's anointed; and this Jewish rite has been diffused and maintained by the superstition and vanity of modern Europe.

"The leaders of a powerful nation would have disdained a servile title and subordinate office, but *the reign of the Greek emperors was suspended;* and in THE VACANCY OF THE EMPIRE, they derived a more glorious commission from the pope and the republic. The power and policy of Charlemagne annihilated an enemy, and imposed a master."*

"The title of patrician was below the merits and greatness of Charlemagne; and it was only by REVIVING THE WESTERN EMPIRE that he could secure the establishment. By this decisive measure they would finally eradicate the claims of the Greeks; from the debasement of a provincial town the majesty of Rome would be restored: and *the Latin Christians would be united under a supreme head in their ancient Metropolis.*

* Hist. Dec. Vol. VI. p. 176—179.

"On the festival of Christmas, the last year of the eighth century. Charlemagne appeared in the church of St. Peter; and to gratify the vanity of Rome, he had exchanged the simple dress of his country for the habit of a patrician. After the celebration of the holy mysteries, Leo suddenly placed a crown on his head, and the dome resounded with the acclamations of the people, long life and victory to Charles, the most pious Augustus, crowned by God the great and pacific emperor of the Romans. Without injustice to his fame," adds the historian, "I may discern some blemishes in the sanctity and greatness of THE RESTORER OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE."*

As to the extent of this empire, I quote from the same historian what is amply supported by the testimony of other writers. "It extended between east and west from the Ebro to the Elbe or Vistula; between the north and south from the Dutchy of Beneventum to the river Eyder, the perpetual boundary of Germany and Denmark. The islands of Great Britain and Ireland were disputed by a crowd of princes of Saxon or Scottish origin; and, after the loss of Spain, the Christian and Gothic kingdom of Alphonso the Chaste, was confined to the narrow range of the Asturian mountains. These petty sovereigns revered the power or virtue of the Carlovingian monarch, implored the honour and support of his alliance, and styled him their common parent, *the sole and supreme emperor of the west.*"

The transfer of the imperial throne from France to Germany was effected in the reign of Otho, also

* Hist. Dec. Vol. VI. p. 190—193.

called the Great, Anno 962. "He," says Mr. Gibbon, "was the conqueror and apostle of the Slavic nations of the Elbe and the Oder; the marches of Brandenberg and Sleswick were fortified with German colonies: and the king of Denmark, the dukes of Poland and Bohemia, confessed themselves his tributary vassals. At the head of a victorious army, he passed the Alps, subdued the kingdom of Italy, delivered the pope, and for ever fixed the imperial crown in the name and nation of Germany."*

"The empire of Charlemagne and Otho was distributed among the Dukes of the nations or provinces, the Counts of the smaller districts, and the Wargraves of the marches or frontiers, who all united the civil and military authority as it had been delegated to the lieutenants of the first Cesars. The golden bull which fixes the Germanic constitution, is promulgated in the style of a sovereign and legislator. An hundred princes bowed before his throne, and exalted their own dignity by the voluntary honours which they yielded to their chief. Nor was the supremacy of the emperor confined to Germany alone: the hereditary monarchs of Europe confessed the pre-eminence of his rank and dignity: he was the first of the Christian princes, THE TEMPORAL HEAD OF THE GREAT REPUBLIC OF THE WEST. The oracle of the civil law, the learned Bartolus, was a pensioner of Charles the fourth, (Century xiv.) and his school resounded with the doctrine, that the Roman emperor was the rightful sovereign of the earth, from the rising to the setting sun. The contrary opinion was

* Hist. Dec. Vol. VI. p. 199.

condemned, not as an error, but as a heresy, since even the gospel had pronounced, *and there went forth a decree from Cesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed.*"*

By these passages, from the pen of a celebrated writer, who had not the most remote idea of accommodating history to the scripture prophecy, it is evident, that the western empire was indeed restored and continued in the persons of Charlemagne and Otho, and the successors of Otho on the throne of Germany, down even to our own time. Here then, we find *the great Roman beast* revived in the west, while under the first and second wo he was expiring in the east; and this last supreme head of the empire becomes of course the object of the third wo. It is to be destroyed in order that the nations may undergo a thorough reformation. An entire revolution is of course to take place throughout all the kingdoms erected within the bounds of the Roman empire; and the emperor of Germany is to be remarkably distinguished by the wo inflicted upon him in the overthrow of his power.

In this view of the Germanic empire I am not alone. Mr. Faber also remarked, that "the emperor has always claimed, and has always been allowed, precedence over every one of the ten horns: and as such he has invariably been considered as the head of the *Great European commonwealth.*" He also refers to Sir George M'Kenzie as saying, "amongst kings, the emperor is allowed the first place by the famous ceremonial of Rome, as succeeding to the

* Hist. Dec. Vol. VI. p. 214—219.

Roman emperors—and therefore the German and Italian lawyers, who are subject to the empire, have with much flattery asserted, that the emperor is the Vicar of God in temporals, and that jurisdictions are derived from him, as from the fountain, calling him *dominum et caput totius orbis.*"*

Such was the political condition of Europe when the seventh angel sounded the third wo trumpet, under which the present convulsions commenced, which are by the irrevocable decree of heaven to terminate in the total overthrow of all the governments now existing, and in the establishment of a general reformation upon true Christian principles.

In the year 1672, the third wo terminated with the siege of Cameniec; at the end of the hour, the day, the month, and the year, of the Euphratean horsemen: but the effects of that revolution in the Greek empire are still witnessed in the existence of the Ottoman power. In a little more than one century after the abolition of the power of the eastern Cesars, that judgment commenced which is destined to destroy the revived empire of the west. The lightnings and thunders which precede the earthquake and the destroying hail, first arrest the solemn attention of the alarmed nations. As two awful clouds rising from distant parts of the horizon, move and approach through the vast tracts of ether, until they meet, and with terrific concussion pour down upon the earth their fire and their hail, so the two opposite and contending interests of liberty and of despotism, gathering new strength in distant parts of the civilized world, meet

* Vol. II. Page 190.

in the heart of the empire, and extend their dreadful convulsions over all its members.

The revolution of 1776, which separated for ever from the British crown the United States of America, taught the inhabitants of Europe a practical lesson, upon the subject of effectual resistance to oppression, which shall never be forgotten. The dismemberment of the kingdom of Poland, by the three neighbouring tyrants of Russia, Prussia, and Austria, which was planned in 1772, and executed in despite of the patriotic exertions of the brave Kosciusko, in 1795, gave to the civilized world an unequivocal witness that thrones of iniquity are deaf to the voice of reason and of justice; and still are ready to reduce to practice the doctrine which a feeble or base priesthood have charged upon the Christian religion, that the possession of power gives a right to rule; and binds, under the risk of divine wrath, the weak into submission, without daring to call in question the right by which they are held in durance. It was in the heart of civilized Europe, however, that the third wo commenced.

France, the central power, the most populous, the most learned, the most licentious, and not the least despotic of the nations; France, considered as the SUN *of the antichristian system;* the kingdom in which was actually revived the empire of the west, was destined to become the principal instrument of its final ruin. She had given assistance to the sons of freedom, on the plains and along the shores of Columbia, until the Republican eagle snatched the oppressed provinces from the paw of the royal lion of England. She

transported from our shores across the tempestuous Atlantic the fire of liberty, and it speedily burst forth, in an awful flame, in her own capital.

But France was morally incapable of an immediate enjoyment of liberty and peace. She was corrupted by the long and gloomy reign of tyranny and superstition. In the scale of morality she occupied the lowest grade. It was, moreover, inconsistent with that distributive justice, which metes out to every nation as such its full measure, to permit those who had abundantly shed the blood of the martyrs, to escape a proportionate vengeance. The sins of the fathers must be visited upon their impenitent children. The throne of Louis, and the altar at which his priests ministered with unwashed hands, had been both defiled with the blood of the saints, and they both require to be washed in the blood of the guilty persecutor.

Where are the instruments of the punishment to be found? Where are they who shall prevent the establishment of liberty in France? They are found among her own unprincipled sons; among her ambitious, disunited, fickle, and ferocious demagogues; among the foes of freedom in the world; and on the several thrones of the adjacent nations. The heathen raged: the kingdoms were moved: the pillars of empire began to tremble: tyrants felt their heads for their crowns; and with convulsive violence grasping their sceptres, they resolved at Pilnitz, that the example of America should not be copied in Europe; and that the iron law which had recently been adopted for the purpose of annihilating the kingdom of

Poland, should be applied in its full rigour to revolutionary France, until her rising liberties should sink into the tomb. The confederacy of European monarchs was formed.* France resisted. The contest commenced. The angel of death presided over the storm. He blows his trumpet. It is the third and the last wo to the inhabiters of the great Roman empire.

The French revolution took place in the year 1789. THE STATES GENERAL, an assembly consisting of three distinct bodies, nobles, clergy, and common people, which had not met for nearly two hundred years, were convened by the call of Louis XVI. on the 5th of May. They all met in one hall. The representatives of the people equalled in number the other two orders; and they assumed the name of the NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. They abolished the nobility; destroyed the feudal system; reduced the clergy to a state of dependence on the public treasury, confiscating the property of the church. They erected a limited monarchy. The king reluctantly yielded. He was insincere, and they were distrustful; and in the year 1792, they called a NATIONAL CONVENTION. It met on the 21st September, and immediately resolved to erect upon the ruins of the monarchy a republican system. On the 21st January 1793, *Louis Capet,* the dethroned king of France, who had been alternately a captive and a fugitive, was put to death; and the new republic had to pre-

* "The Partition Treaty was signed July 1791, and on the following month the treaty of Pilnitz was signed personally by the emperor and the king of Prussia."

pare herself against the wrath which she provoked by her cruelty; and especially by her disrespect for the powers of Europe, including the imperial *head* of the Roman *earth*, and the several *horns of the beast, the kings of the earth.*

These were all instigated to bring down upon themselves, by their own instrumentality, the *wo* which was denounced upon them by the God of heaven on account of their sins; they rushed into the battle, and France had to contend with the combined powers of Austria, Prussia, Sardinia, and the Empire, together with Great Britain, Spain, and the United Provinces.

France too, a *wo* to herself, was remarkably fitted to be a wo to the inhabiters of the earth; faction upon faction arose to distract her repose; she started from the most corrupt and irrational kind of superstition to the extreme of Atheism, and she speedily reverted to her former creed. She changed her forms of government from year to year, and her rapacious demagogues were alternately the murderers and the victims. She is at last become a great military empire, guided and influenced by the will of one man of gigantic power, of unceasing activity, of unrivalled practical skill in the art of war, and of boundless ambition, who is at this moment reaping in the heart of Germany the harvest of God's wrath; and so fulfilling the predictions of my text, and serving in the most effectual manner a God whom he does not know or worship.

The event is not at all doubtful. Whatever may become of Napoleon Buonaparte; the Germanic

empire must be overthrown; and the kingdoms of Europe, overturned by this terrible wo, shall afterwards be organized upon Christian instead of anti-christian principles.

III. *Practical Remarks.*

Having detained you so long, in the contemplation of divine judgments upon human empires; and in the consideration of political movements, I deem it a duty, before I dismiss you, to direct your eye toward him who sits enthroned in light unconceivable; and to suggest ideas, such as the Christian should habitually cherish upon taking a view of the sinful policies of human societies.

1. Your God, Christians, reigns over the nations of the earth, and will ultimately be glorified in all their revolutions. *He made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.* In him too all things consist: for they are upheld by the word of his power. Before he called them into existence, he determined in what manner they should be governed: and he constrains them to answer the purpose for which they were formed, however unwilling they may be to obey what he commands. He, who holds the waters of the deep in the hollow of his hand, sits upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants are as grasshoppers before him. He overrules their wishes and their exertions; their deliberations and their decrees; their opinions and their passions; their pride and their ambition; their wis-

dom and their folly; their treaties and their battles, for the accomplishment of his benevolent designs. To him, my brethren, yes, to him do ye look. He is your God and your Redeemer. He is your own and your fathers' Friend. All things shall co-operate for the salvation of his people. The events which come to pass fulfil his predictions, and so demonstrate the prescience of him who ordered the end from the beginning. Trust in him; rejoice in him; and a great reward shall be given you of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you are come to trust. Standing upon a Rock, you may behold, without dismay, the agitation of the deep, the rolling of the billows, and the tossings of misguided nations. You are safe; and the Lord shall preserve you for ever and ever.

2. Let us ascertain, ye disciples of a munificent Saviour, the end which he has in view; and so employ our agency in bringing it to pass. Nothing can be more honourable than to be serving and promoting the designs of heaven. Thus co-operating with God our labour shall not be in vain, our works shall not be lost, and we shall be certain of success.

In his prophetical discoveries, he is pleased to make known the end: and he has proclaimed the law from Zion, by which we are to be governed in the employment of means to bring that end to pass. Let your political attachments yield to what he demands: let your ideas of self-interest be subjected to the fulfilment of his precepts: let your prejudices and your partialities, as well as your deliberate sentiments, be

offered up to your God; and let your ardent prayers accord exactly with the information which he gives relative to his judgments upon the great anti-christian empire, and to the instruments which he employs to inflict the threatened wo.

In vain you would desire a different result from that which he has predicted. In vain you would oppose the plan which he has laid down and proclaimed. Omniscience discards the counsels of short-sighted man: and Omnipotence is not to be resisted by the feeble arm of flesh. Your personal welfare, O believers, though you know not the method, will be effectually promoted; the good of the church, the ultimate interests of human society, the glory of the moral Governor of the world, will be promoted. Say not then as did Peter in the rashness of his zeal and the ardour of his affection, "far be this design from thee;" lest you meet with the humiliating rebuke, "get thee behind me Satan." Embark not your hopes and your affections in the cause of apostate nations; lest your affections should be involved in wo, and your hope should perish. "Thus saith the Lord God, of every profane and wicked prince," of the head of the empire of the west, and of all its different kingdoms, "whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end: thus saith the Lord God, Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him."*

* Ezek. xxi. 26.

Thus shall ye be prepared to join in the celestial hymn, of "the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, saying, we give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned—*The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.*"

3. Let us lament the political conduct of Christians in the present age of the world.

I speak not now of those men who profess Christianity, merely because it is the religion of their fathers or of their country; I speak not of those men, who talk of religion as necessary to keep the multitude in subjection, but not at all necessary to men of learning and of rank; I speak not of those men who degrade Christianity into an instrument of avarice or ambition: but of those who love my God, who trust in my Redeemer, and enjoy the fellowship of the Holy Ghost. Many such Christians there are yet upon the earth. It is a mercy to the earth that this is the case. Amidst the distractions of the visible church; amidst the confusions of civil societies; amidst the clashings of the nations, there are thousands and hundreds of thousands of such holy men scattered over the earth: but they are yet in a state of imperfection; and their political conduct is generally lamentable.

To them, this seventh and last trumpet is a voice of warning, and the harbinger of triumphant joy and peace. To the world, this trumpet is a wo: to the inhabiters of the Latin empire, the symbolical earth,

it is a wo. To the Germanic empire, the successors of Charlemagne and of the Cesars, it is the great and the last wo: to the *horns of the beast*, the crowned heads of Europe, its language is, *your kingdom is departed from you.* Concerning revolutionary France, impious and ambitious nation, the prophecy says, Thou art this wo, *the rod of mine indignation*, —the principal instrument of these overwhelming judgments.

Is it not then lamentable to see the disciples of our Lord divided from one another, by attachments to such contending powers. They enlist with zeal in the contest; and take opposite sides in the field, in the forum, in the pulpit, and in the oratory. They indulge in violent passions; they cherish lasting animosities; they weaken one another's hands; they bring reproach upon their profession; they give occasion to worldly men to laugh at the religion, which is thus, so often, degraded into a political instrument of party spirit; and they insult the throne of grace with contradictory prayers entirely inadmissible before the Lord.

Let not this for ever be the case. The remedy is easy. It is at hand. Form your estimate of the nations by the light of truth. Weigh their pretensions in the balance of the sanctuary. Religion is not with any of them identified. It pronounces their punishment; and hails the approaching reformation. They are only kingdoms of this world, which must perish for their iniquities.

Examine the character of the principal warriors and statesmen; admire if you will their various and

splendid talents; judge of their comparative qualities and merit; reason upon the proximate and remote effects of their achievements; indulge so far as you will your conjectures upon the particular and general results of the great contests which are going on: on all these points you may indulge different sentiments, and be guiltless; but Oh! for the love which you bear to our Lord, who died for our sins, and now governs the nations, preserve your love for one another, and for the cause of God; and studiously avoid indulging either wishes or opinions which are inconsistent with what he has revealed to you in this book. AMEN.

THE SEVEN GOLDEN VIALS.

LECTURE VIII.

Rev. xv. 11....*And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials, full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.*

THE instinctive impulse to acquire knowledge, which every man feels in a greater or less degree, is remarkably connected in all its exercises with the love of society. Secluded entirely from the prospect of imparting to others the result of our own inquiries, study would speedily be forsaken by perseverance, and curiosity herself must lose her power. This law of our nature, the existence of which cannot be disputed, is an additional evidence of the wisdom and benevolence of him who made us, and who appointed to all the sons of men the bounds of their habitation; because it greatly multiplies the means of personal improvement and general felicity.

The author of our being said of man, while yet in primitive innocence and excellence, "It is not good that he should be alone." Provided with social principles, a great part of our faculties would

remain unoccupied, and much of our happiness would be cut off, were we separated for ever from society, and constrained to live in eternal solitude. In the pursuit of information the strongest excitement which we feel consists in the hope of communicating our acquirements to our fellow-creatures; and personal enjoyment is multiplied by the opportunity of admitting others into a participation of them. Religion too, would be stripped of her most interesting ornaments, were each individual secluded by her commands from the presence of witnesses, and confined in a solitary residence, however magnificently furnished. The communion of saints is one of her precious blessings. *Wo to him that is alone. God setteth the solitary in families.*

The principle under consideration is that which imparts to history her peculiar charms. "By the power of memory, a thing formerly seen may be recalled to the mind with different degrees of accuracy;" and history is an enlarged artificial memory. "With respect to interesting objects and events, we are not satisfied with a cursory review, but must dwell upon every circumstance. I am imperceptibly converted into a spectator, and perceive every particular passing in my presence, as if I were, in reality, a spectator."* A great part of the art of the historian, accordingly, consists in preserving without interruption this ideal presence of his reader with the persons and the events which he is describing and for this purpose it is necessary that he carry on his narration without perplexing it with too great a

* Lord Kaime's Elements of Criticism.

variety of circumstances, however legitimately connected with his principal subject. He must attend to the actual and present concerns of his company, without attempting to divert our attention by the family history of the several members. He will find himself, nevertheless, constrained to return, in a subsequent chapter, to the consideration of persons and things connected with his principal theme, and accordingly necessary to be known, although the order of time should be reversed.

This must needs be the case also with the history of future events furnished in the Apocalyptical prophecies. Having pursued directly in chronological order the series of important events predicted, until we arrive at a certain point, we must return to the contemplation of another series, which at this point meets with the former, and which gives the character in a greater or less degree to the subsequent events most interesting to the house of God.

We are now arrived, in the course of these lectures, at that point, which calls for these general observations. In the exposition of the seals and the trumpets we have pursued the history of society, as connected with the great concerns of christianity, in the regular order of time, from the age of the apostles until the overthrow of the great Roman power in both the west and the east. *Under the six seals*, we have attended to the leading events of the FIRST PERIOD; and so explained the judgments of heaven upon the *Pagan empire*. Under the seventh seal, we found the trumpets: and in the exposition of *the six trumpets*, we have described the judgments which

overthrew the *Christian empire*, in the SECOND PERIOD of this prophecy. By the seventh trumpet, intimation has been given of the events of several subsequent periods; and so far as it was a wo trumpet, it synchronizes with a part of the period of the vials, to which the chapter, from which I have taken my text, is introductory.

This is THE THIRD GREAT PERIOD *of the Apocalypse.*

It exhibits, as we shall show in due time, the judgments of a righteous God upon the *antichristian empire;* and, as it involves the history of the most interesting concerns of the Christian church in her connexion with the several civilized nations of Europe, it is by far the most important period of this sacred book. To it belongs of course the greater part of the predictions; and we accordingly will devote to it more time and attention. In our transition from the trumpets to the vials, we must, however, return from the point of time at which we had arrived, to the consideration of that point at which this period commences. Indeed it is necessary to begin earlier than the period itself with our discussion, in order to give a correct idea of the grand object of the vials, by a history of the rise of that antichristian system, which it is their part to punish and demolish.

I confine myself in this introductory discourse to an exposition of my text and context—and a developement of the plan which I propose to pursue in explaining the events of the period which lies before us.

I. I shall *explain the figurative phraseology* of my text, and so ascertain its meaning.

In this interpretation we must needs attend *to the vials and their contents—to the agents employed for using them—to the personage who delivered the vials into the hands of the seven angels*—and, *to the accompanying* CHORUS.

1. The *instruments* of this righteous judgment, are called in the text *seven golden vials full of the wrath of God.* In the eighth verse of this chapter these are denominated *the seven plagues;* and, in verse 1, *the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.* These expressions convey to the most superficial reader, the idea of punishment inflicted by Jehovah upon some certain criminals convicted by adequate evidence before his awful tribunal.

"The English word *vials* may mislead the reader. They were such cups as were used in the temple for the purpose of libations, wider at the top than at the bottom."* Φιαλη, which we render *vial,* is probably derived from πιειν αλις, to drink enough, and signifies a bowl or small basin. In this sense, the learned Daubuz shows it is used by the best Greek writers. The Seventy likewise employ it generally as the translation of מזרק a bowl or basin.† The name Phiale was therefore given to the famous fountain, or lake, at the foot of mount Hermon, from

* Dr. Priestley's Notes on the text.

† See Parkhurst.

whence Jordan derives its stream, from its resemblance to a great basin.*

These golden vials were designed, however, to hold not the incense which symbolizes the prayers of the saints, and are accepted of the Lord; but the wrath of heaven which is to be poured out upon the earth as the effect of his justice in the punishment of transgressors. *Golden* vials they nevertheless are, for his judgments are just and precious; and are, in their place, essentially necessary for the preservation of the order of his empire. *Seven*,† the number of completeness, is the number of the golden vials; for they are the *last plagues;* and embrace the whole wrath of God toward the object of the vials. No punishment hath ever been inflicted upon the antichristian system which is not placed under these vials: nor shall any judgments hereafter come down upon the *symbolical earth*, which are not included under this complete arrangement. The vials, of course, embrace whatsoever hath hitherto come to pass in the providence of God, for the punishment and overthrow of the grand apostacy. This consideration ought itself to be sufficient grounds for rejecting that interpretation, which, by whatever names it is supported, renders all the vials subsequent to the era of the reformation. He must be blind indeed to the light of history, who denies, that during that remarkable period, judgments were inflicted upon the kingdom of the beast.

2. The *agents* employed in pouring out upon the apostate nations, those cups of the Lord's indigna-

* Calmet. † See page 61.

tion, are said in the text to be *seven angels.* They appear, verse 1, as a sign in heaven, great and marvellous; and verse 6, they come out of the temple in order to execute their commission. *And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.* The sign, Σημειον, was seen by the apostle John in *heaven;* and it was not only *great,* but also *marvellous* in his estimation. *Heaven* is the symbol of the true church of God. There, the *signs* of the times are to be seen and known. This, verse 1, was *another* sign, in addition to that described in chap. xii. 1. *That* one is called in our translation a *wonder;* but the word in the original is the same as in this case. The signification in both instances is the same. The events were to come to pass on *earth;* but the *sign* was seen in heaven. On account of the church, her antichristian enemies shall be punished; and that punishment is *signified* and made known to the church for the comfort of all her faithful sons, and for their encouragement in resisting the man of sin.

The angels themselves are the messengers of divine justice—the actual dispensations of Providence. *They come out of the temple with the plagues,* which they are appointed to inflict.

Penal dispensations are predicted in the church, are solicited from God in prayer against the enemies of the kingdom of Christ, and are appointed by the Head of the church for the sake of his body. They are consequently holy. The angels indeed appear stepping forth from the holy oracle, to fulfil the di-

vine will, in the habiliments of the high priest, *in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.* Girded up for their work, with clean hands and a pure heart, they shed the blood of the victim; and yet their own garments remain unpolluted. They are justified in their deeds. It is the command of God; and, although destructive of the lives of thousands, they are right who direct the execution. Abraham was commanded to offer in sacrifice his beloved son; and was justified in his intentional obedience, although the deed would have been without a parallel for cruelty, if it had been unauthorized; and would certainly be so reckoned, in the world, by those who knew not the authority upon which the Father of the faithful acted. The punishments of the antichristian foe, are thus also capable of vindication, although they may appear to those who are ignorant, both of the law and the extent of guilt incurred, severe and blood-thirsty.

"These seven plagues," says Dr. Johnston, "which under *seven distinct dispensations* of divine providence, partly have been, and partly shall be, brought upon Papal Rome, as predicted in the following chapter, shall all be brought upon her, in her public or national character, for the injuries which she hath done, and still shall do, in that character, to the persecuted church of Christ, during that period. That these plagues upon Rome, shall come out of the church of Christ during that period, is intimated chap. xi. 6.

These have power to smite the earth, (the empire) *with all plagues as often as they will.* These angels,

like the high priest under the law, are clothed with fine and white linen, and have their breasts girded with golden girdles. Thus it is symbolically represented, that these dispensations are the ministers of God; that they strictly execute the divine command; and act only ministerially in bringing those plagues upon Papal Rome."

3. He who delivered unto the seven angels these last plagues, deserves our attention.

One of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God. The four beasts are the Τεσσαρα Ζωα of chap v. We have already corrected the translation of these words, and explained their meaning.* These *four living creatures* are the ministers of the gospel: and one of them, that is, a certain class of christian ministers, delivered unto the authorized agents of divine judgments, the vials of wrath. This action, beheld in vision by the apostle John, is very expressive. The *living creature* had received from his master the seven *plagues*,† which were to fall upon the antichris-

* Page 55.

† Πληγη, whether derived immediately from πλησσω to *smite*, or remotely from פלץ to *shake*, denotes such a calamity as inflicts a heavy blow upon its subject. The strokes of vengeance upon the antichristian empire are many and severe. They are nevertheless appointed by the *Head* of the church; and the *ministers* of the church will, of course, denounce the judgments; and, instead of lamenting or preventing the execution of the sentence, will order the agents of Providence to their work.

tian powers, civil and ecclesiastic; and he, coming out of heaven, gives them up to the angels, in order to execute without delay the sentence passed upon the inhabitants of the earth. ONE only, of the *four living creatures*, is thus employed. While the many pastors and teachers of the church are occupied, in promoting by other methods the interests of Christ's kingdom, there are a *few*, of more public spirit, of more correct information, of greater fidelity to the social concerns of the Christian world, and of less subserviency to the schemes of temporizing politicians, who deliver up to the angels the plagues which come upon the nations. They do so, by explaining and applying the predictions—by testifying against lawless power—by plainly pronouncing sentence, from the word of God, upon the opposers of righteousness—by actual encouragement to the instruments of vengeance—and by prayer for the overthrow of *Satan's* kingdom, including the several kingdoms of the *Roman earth*. Psa. lxxix. 6, 7. *Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name. For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling-place.*

Judgments, inflicted upon the nations, for the sake of the church, ought certainly to be approved of by her members and her ministers. We are bound to pray for them, as appears from this verse, and also from the example of the prophet Jeremiah, x. 25. We are, moreover, required to rejoice in them. Psa. xlviii. 11. "Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments." Nor is this incon-

sistent with that benevolent and merciful spirit which becometh the disciples of our Lord. It is assuredly consistent with piety, to acquiesce in what its author finds necessary, for his own glory, to do: and the charity of Christians cannot be sincere, when it tends to prevent what the Redeemer himself, in his mercy to them, performs in support of true religion. Is it inconsistent with the holiness of angels to approve of the divine justice in the punishment of men? Is it not consistent with the holiness of God to reveal his wrath? and can it, then, be inconsistent with an evangelical disposition, to rejoice in the overthrow of the nations that do hurt to the church of God, and so oppose the best interests of the human family?

Christians cannot, I admit, entirely divest themselves of solicitude for the prosperity of the civil communities to which they belong. They ought not to be negligent of such things. Their own temporal interests, the lives, and the property of their friends and their relatives, are interwoven with the national policy. Their passions and their prejudices are interested in the political elevation or degradation of certain men; their own fears and hopes, and their calculations of futurity, co-operating with patriotic sentiments, very frequently and very justly influence their opinions and their wishes. The obligations of truth, of piety, of the divine will expressed to the reasonable creature, still, however, remain in force; and, if the combined effect, of such circumstances as have been mentioned, extenuates the crime of inattention to the purposes of Providence in the revolutions of nations, it by no means can justify resist-

ance to these purposes, or vindicate the man who laments the demolition of thrones of iniquity, and looks back fretfully, like the wife of Lot, upon the ruins of Sodom and Gomorrah.

A very different state of things is represented in this chapter. The angel of destruction comes out of the church—*the temple;* and the minister of Christ gives up to him the plagues which he is to inflict on the world.

4. A holy company also appears in the church, celebrating the event in songs of exultation. Verses 2—4. *And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sung the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee: for thy judgments are made manifest.* This celestial band of choristers demand your attention, my brethren, that understanding their *situation*, their *character*, and their *song*, you may join their hallowed company, and take a cheerful share in their virtuous exercises.

1. *They stand on a sea of glass mingled with fire.* This chrystal sea, chap. iv. 6. was before the throne in the temple of Jehovah. It represents the blood

of the covenant, by which we are justified and sanctified.* In this vision, the sea appears *mingled with fire.* Its waves flash with the flames of divine indignation, shining high to the glory of his justice. The situation of the saints is accordingly described as consisting in union with Christ in the merits of his atoning sacrifice, and in his exercise of vengeance upon them who are not interested in the atonement, and obey not the gospel. Our God is a *consuming fire.* The holy choristers stand upon the rock, and the divine perfections are as a wall of fire around them for the destruction of their persecutors.

2. They are characterized as having *gotten the victory,* and as having *the harps of God.*

They who stand upon the sea of glass, are "conquerors, and more than conquerors through him that loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood. For they overcame by the *blood of the Lamb,* and by the *word of their testimony.*"† They had celestial harps given to them. This instrument of music is of great antiquity. Jubal, Gen. iv. 21. invented both harps and organs before the time of the general deluge. Harps were in use in the temple service; and are described as uttering lofty and cheerful sounds, adapted to a happy condition of the church. The use of them was laid aside during the captivity, as unsuitable to the depressed state of the saints in Chaldea. Psa. cxxxvii. 1, 2. "By the rivers of

* This symbol is explained page 54.

† Rom. viii. 37. Rev. xii. 11.

Babylon there we sat down; yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We *hanged our harps upon the willows,* in the midst thereof." The music of the harp was less of the plaintive than of the eucharistic kind, as appears from its description—*solemn and sweet melody,* employed in giving thanks to God for his mighty works.* It is therefore suited to the song of the conquerors, when they beheld the angels of the vials going forth to pour out the wrath of God upon their enemies.

This company are also characterized, from the nature of the warfare which they had accomplished. It is of a peculiar kind. *They had gotten the victory over the* BEAST, *and over his* IMAGE, *and over his* MARK, *and over the* NUMBER *of his name.* It is of importance to the correct interpretation of this prophecy, that definite ideas be attached to each of the four symbols mentioned as overcome. A full exposition of them must, however, be postponed until a subsequent part of these lectures, when we shall assign our reasons for the sense in which we now understand them.

THE BEAST is the WESTERN EMPIRE, in its civil capacity, with *all the governments of its several kingdoms,* tyrannical, immoral, and opposing pure christianity by establishing corrupt religious systems, and by persecuting those who dissent from such establishments.

The IMAGE OF THE BEAST, is the *papacy,*—the impious *human headship of the church,* reduced, for mere political purposes, into the *form* of a worldly kingdom.

* Isa. xxiii. 16. Psa. xcii. 1—3.

The MARK OF THE BEAST, is the ACTUAL PROFESSION OF THE ESTABLISHED SUPERSTITION, by those, who, contrary to the law and the testimony of Jesus Christ, worship according to the inventions of men.

The NUMBER of the name of the beast, or the NAME itself, is the LATIN SYSTEM OF SOCIAL ORDER, in the great corrupt political and ecclesiastical commonwealth of European nations—Λατεινος, or six hundred and sixty-six. *Latinus*, is the name of the beast.

Against the *beast*, his *image*, his *mark*, and his *name* or *number*, the band of holy men described in this chapter, give their testimony. They oppose, they contend, they conquer, and they triumph. They are, it is true, in turn, opposed, misrepresented, pitied, detested, and persecuted by of their fellow-men; they suffer shame, and reproach, and loss: but they have truth and righteousness upon their side; and they are held up in prophecy as patterns of Christian imitation. They have the approbation of their own enlightened consciences; of the best men in every age; of confessors, apostles, and martyrs; of the prophets who have gone before them; of the angels of light, and of the living and eternal God. Standing, therefore, upon the sea of glass, whose waves flash with fiery indignation against the slavish votaries of antichrist, they behold the faithful ministers of the gospel pronouncing divine judgment, and giving to the angels clad in white, and begirt with girdles of gold, the plagues which shall put an end to the systems of iniquity, which have long afflicted the churches and the nations. Accompanying with their voices the exalted strains of their celestial

harps, *they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.*

The *song of Moses* merits your attentive perusal. It is found in Deut. xxxii. 1—43. "It predicts," says Dr. Johnston, "all the calamities which have befallen the Jews, and the cause of them. It foretells the character, rise, height, and downfal of antichrist; and closes with the Jews and Gentiles united in one church, singing in concert their triumph over the common enemy." "*The song of the Lamb,*" adds the same writer, "is recorded in this book, chap. v. 8—14. How exactly does this song celebrate the joyful occasion of the commencement of the millennium, and represent both Jew and Gentile united in the same triumphant victory over antichrist?"

The following words is a compend of these two remarkable songs. "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who would not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest."

The language of this song requires no exposition. Piety will always suggest to the judicious Christian suitable instances of the greatness and goodness of our almighty King. Let all glorify him, for in the vials of his wrath are his judgments made manifest; and all the nations shall hereafter *come and worship* before him. In the mean time few understand the merits of the controversy between the world and the church.

"True Christians steadily give their testimony as witnesses, in favour of the latter; but some men take

one side of the question, and others the other; and multitudes calling in question the knowledge or the veracity of these two witnesses, hence, during that period, take the wrong side of that important and interesting question. But, when in the course of divine providence, Rome shall be completely overthrown, in the manner and at the time predicted in this book; when those whose religion consists in that truth, righteousness, peace, and joy, which the bible teaches, shall in the course of divine providence increase in number, and rise into high respect in the world; these events shall be justly considered, as they are in themselves the publication of the judgment or sentence of God himself, in favour of the pure, simple, and scriptural religion of Christ. This view which the minds of men shall take of these events, shall be one principal instrument in the hand of God at that period, to make all the Gentiles come and worship before God."*

II. I shall lay before you an *outline of the plan* which I propose to pursue, in explaining the events of the third Apocalyptical period.

It is absolutely necessary, in order to understand the operation and effects of the seven golden vials, that we previously know the character of that system of antichristian disorder which they are intended to punish and destroy. It is uncontrovertibly proved, by the commission given to the seven angels, who had received these vials, that the grand object of the

* Dr. Johnston's Commentary on the Revelation, p. 121, 122.

wrath of God contained in them is the SYMBOLICAL EARTH—the western Roman empire. Chap. xv. 1. "And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the EARTH."*

This object, so perplexingly and painfully interesting to the greatest and the purest parts of the Christian church, through a succession of ages, had been, long before this Revelation was given to John the Divine, the subject of sacred prediction, and minute description. The prophets of the Old Testament often spake of it; and the New Testament brings it repeatedly into view.

In the prophecies of Daniel, and in several chapters of the Apocalypse, preceding the one in which the vials are introduced to our observation, we have various and very particular representations of this great and long enduring enemy of righteousness in the earth. It is, of course, taken for granted, that, in reading the account given of the pouring out of the vials, we are so far acquainted with the object of the divine judgments, as to understand their special design.

We must therefore request your attention to such preceding predictions, as are necessary to be understood by the student of prophecy, in order to make up a correct opinion upon the events of the period at which we are now arrived.

The account, which we have in this context, of the actual condition of the true church, at the time of commissioning the angels of the vials, is also calcu-

* See in explanation of this symbol, pages 90, 91. and the Introduction to Lecture IX.

lated to enforce the propriety of such considerations. The period of the vials represents the church of God, as possessing the means of extensive knowledge,—as consisting of comparatively a few faithful members—and as finding it peculiarly difficult to increase the number. Verses 5, 8. *And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.* The opening of the temple indicates, as I have shown in the last lecture,* the increase of Christian knowledge, through the means of grace divinely appointed in the church. I do not deny, however, that besides this idea, the consistency of metaphorical language required the opening of the gates of the temple, in order that the angels might go out to their work; but this fact, instead of militating against the interpretation given of the symbol, will, in the present instance, tend to its support. The instruments of vengeance could not have proceeded out of the church, nor could the ministers of religion give up to the proper agents the judgments to be inflicted upon antichrist, without being possessed of correct information upon these subjects. I am therefore justified in maintaining the consistent use of the symbolical phraseology, and in describing this period, as a time of increasing Christian knowledge. The history of the times of the vials will render this fact obvious to all; although the whole period has not

* See page 208.

been so remarkable for the diffusion of the light of the gospel, as that part of it now passing over our heads, and which has recently been under discussion.* Then, when the temple was opened, the *ark of the covenant* was also *revealed;* but, in the case before us, the temple was *filled with smoke* from the glory of the Lord, and from his power, and *no man was able to enter into the temple.*

This expression denotes both the *paucity* of church members, and the *difficulty of augmenting* their number. Και εγεμισθη ὁ ναος καπνȣ εκ της δοξης τȣ Θεȣ. The glory of God, Δοξα τȣ Θεȣ, is the SHEKINAH, above the mercy-seat, God in Christ, or rather, the Glory-Jehovah;† for it is the translation of the Hebrew כבוד יהוה.‡ From him, God our Redeemer, the head of the church, proceeds the symbolical smoke. It cannot of course be like the *smoke of the* pit, under the first wo, a system of falsehood and delusion, such as the Mahometan Koran; but a righteous display of his own perfections in the punishment of transgressors. Καπνος, smoke, is from Καιω, to burn, and πνοη, breath, and signifies an exhalation from burning, literally, the *burning breath* of the Lord. There is undoubtedly a reference in these words to the facts recorded by Moses and the writer of the book of

* See Page 209.

† The learned reader will derive much gratification on this subject from an attentive perusal of a Dissertation on God's Visible Presence, by Lord Barrington. *Miscellanea Sacra*, vol. iii. p. 147. London, 1770.

‡ See Hab. ii. 14. Isa. xl. 5. and lx. 1, 2. Rom. vi. 4. James ii. 1. Compare with Rev. xxi. 11, 25. See also Note, page 52.

1 Kings. Exod. xl. 35. "And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. 1 Kings viii. 10, 11. "The cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister, because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord." It is not however an insignificant reference to these facts. It declares that none entered into the church—the temple, for a specified time, during the period of the vials—*till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.*

Such is the tendency of the antichristian opposition, and the consequent judgments, that it is difficult, even in a Christian land, to ascertain the path of duty; and the effect is, that, while *the world wonders after the beast*, there are few who enter among the faithful witnesses of primitive truth and order, against the corrupt systems of the several nations of christendom. The multiplicity of interests and temptations, with which the political condition of Christians is embarrassed, so far prevails over the abundant means of Christian knowledge, that the pure church is a small minority among their fellow-men. It is, of course, the more necessary, that we attend to this subject, and become ourselves, my brethren, faithful in our generation.

In order to assist you in your resolutions, to act with those who dwell in the tabernacle of the testimony, during this eventful period, I intend to explain the subjects connected with the golden vials of God's wrath, in the following order.

1. I shall show that the object of the wrath of God, poured out from the golden vials, is THE ANTICHRIST. And in my lecture upon this subject, I trust I shall be able to convince you, that, notwithstanding the recent and the very learned efforts of Mr. Faber, to restrict the application of this title of infamy to modern and revolutionary France, the Fathers of the reformation have not been mistaken in their application of it to the corrupt system of Roman tyranny and superstition. I shall show from the inspired writings of John, of Daniel, and of Paul, that the great apostacy, connected with the fourth universal empire, is designated not improperly the antichrist, which is defined to be *that abuse of the Christian religion, which, interwoven with tyrannical constitutions of civil polity within the bounds of the western empire of the Cesars, is opposed to the true religion, and an obstacle to its prevalence in church and state.*

2. I shall explain the contents of THE LITTLE BOOK of the Apocalypse. Here I must also oppose Mr. Faber, and justify the arrangement of bishop Newton, limiting this book to chap. xi. 1—14. In the exposition, we shall describe the two great contending parties, who carry on a warfare of 1260 years. *A heathenized church in connexion with immoral governments,* in opposition to *the true church, the witnesses of Christianity.*

3. I shall give, from the *twelfth* chapter, an exposition of the vision of the WOMAN and the DRAGON,

another representation of the contest between the true church of Christ and the power of the civil arm, throughout the whole empire during the same period of 1260 years.

4. A lecture upon the *thirteenth* chapter, which gives a more full description of the character of the Roman apostacy, will furnish you with the interpretation of THE TWO BEASTS, the ten-horned beast of the *sea*, and the two-horned beast of the *earth*, together with that of the IMAGE of the beast, of the MARK of the beast, of his NAME, and the NUMBER of his name. These visions are another collateral history of that system which it is the design of the vials to punish and destroy.

5. I shall give, from the fourteenth chapter, a compendious history of the Christian religion, in its truth and power, during the same remarkable period of the general apostacy. In this history, there will appear three distinctly marked epochs of peculiar success in spreading the saving knowledge of revealed religion in the world; and in opposing the errors of antichrist. The conclusion exhibits the *harvest* and the *vintage* of divine judgments upon the commonwealth of European nations.

6. Having thus explained, in detail, my views of that system, which in the providence of God has been permitted to afflict the earth for centuries, I shall proceed to give the history of each vial by itself, comparing the event with the prediction.

This will complete the discussion of the *third period*, called THE PERIOD OF THE VIALS.

CONCLUSION.

You will allow me now, Christians, before we separate for the day, to suggest the two following ideas to your consideration.

1. As you discover, by your attention to this course of lectures, a sincere desire to understand the Apocalyptical predictions, I respectfully solicit an interest in your prayers, while I am endeavouring to aid your inquiries.

To myself, it is highly desirable to be preserved from the influence of any prejudices whatever, during my researches into this sacred book: and it is not desirable to you, who wait on my ministry, that I should be subject to any partialities. It would be no advantage to you, that I should flatter and deceive you. Were I permitted to prostrate so far the dignity of my ministry, as to use exertions for insinuating myself into the esteem of worldly politicians, and give myself to the service of a certain party, I might possibly succeed in gaining the attachment of some at the expense of the resentment of others: but, in so doing, I would deal teacherously with the word of truth, I would forfeit the esteem of my own conscience, and I would provoke the anger of my God. Let me rather adopt the language of Elihu, "Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person: neither let me give flattering titles

unto man. For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my Maker would soon take me away."*

Self-interest, I know, frequently deceives men into opinions which they would not otherwise embrace. The influence of respectable connexions; the esteem of the great or the opulent; early prejudices; the love of country, that strong passion of superior and noble minds; each of these may give a bias to our sentiments, and render conviction less dependent upon evidence than upon our wishes: but I am not conscious of having any interest inconsistent with fidelity to the scriptures; of having any connexions so dear to me as the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven; of cherishing for any other human being so high an esteem, as that in which I hold the prophets and the martyrs; of any prejudices so strong as my attachment for the system maintained by the fathers, by the apostles, and by the ancient reformers; nor of loving any country upon earth to such a degree as to wish, for its sake, that any suffering should befall the inhabitants or rulers of any other country; much less to such a degree as to pervert, for its sake, the code of morality, or the system of prophecy. I habitually desire to derive all my morals, and all my politics, as well as my hope and my faith, from the oracles of God. And I most earnestly solicit your prayers in my behalf, that I may not deceive myself in this matter, and that I may not be led to embrace or inculcate sentiments irreconcileable with the word of truth.

* Job xxxii. 21, 22.

The inspired writers often asked an interest in the prayers of the saints. We need your prayers, my brethren, at all times; and we take peculiar delight in addressing our ministrations to those, who have aided us by their supplications, and who are themselves, thus prepared, in an honest and good heart to receive the word, and to bring forth correspondent fruits.

2. Be careful yourselves to hear, without political prejudices, a discussion of those prophecies, which respect the character and changes of civil and ecclesiastical relations and establishments.

By these, we open the *door of the temple* to you, that you may abound in knowledge more and more. By these, we reveal to your view the commissioners employed by the Almighty Ruler of the universe, to conduct to their appointed end the movements of empire. By these, we introduce to you the few faithful pastors, who, making a correct estimate of national character, denounce the tyrannical and the impious, and give over to the angels the vials of the wrath of God, while they raise a voice to the licentious occupants of thrones, saying, "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. KISS THE SON, LEST HE BE ANGRY, AND YE PERISH."*

Enter into the company of those celestial harpers, who stand upon the mount Zion, singing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.

* Psa. ii. 10—12.

Forget for a time the place of your birth, and the opinions of worldly wisdom; cast away from you the prejudices of your education; banish from your recollection the thoughts of inordinate selfishness, of deceitful honours, of aspiring ambition. Act, my brethren, in the high, the holy, the heavenly character of Christians. Taking a live coal from the altar of incense, arise and stand before the God of the sanctuary, and taking the harps of God, while his wrath is tormenting the irreligious world, join in the sweet and solemn melody, by which the praise of the Creator is celebrated, by the triumphant opponents of antichristian usurpation.

Look around you upon the companions of your song. Lo, they stand upon the sea of glass mingled with fire, before the throne of the Lamb. They have gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name.

Welcome, blessed companions. We join in your exalted music. We repeat the words of your eucharistical hymn. We lift up our hearts and our hands, as well as the offering of our lips, to the God of Abraham—to thee our Father in heaven. "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." AMEN.

THE ANTICHRISTIAN SYSTEM.

LECTURE IX.

Rev. xvi. 1....*And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.*

I HAD occasion, my brethren, to remark to you, on the last Sabbath, that, in order to understand the prophecies of the third Apocalyptical period, it is necessary to have a correct idea of the subject of the punishment inflicted by the outpouring of the seven vials. I also intimated that the necessary information was previously given in this sacred book, so that it is taken for granted that we come to the consideration of this chapter, prepared with some knowledge of the object of these judgments. It would, indeed, be labour in vain, to attempt an elucidation of the current events from scripture, without having previously submitted ourselves to the direction of the sacred oracles. No acuteness of intellect, no diligence of research, no extent of erudition, will suffice to understand this subject, unless the heart, sanctified

by grace, cherish principles of submission to the Ruler of the nations, to such a degree as to prefer his word to the counsels of cabinets, and the prosperity of his kingdom to the triumphs of human empires.

That piety which, unbiassed by views of national policy, rejoices in the moral government of God, is necessary to study with impartiality the *great social concerns of the moral world*, and, of course, to understand the predictions of heaven respecting them. This representation is supported by one of the prophets. Dan. xii. 10. *Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and* NONE *of the wicked shall understand; but the* WISE *shall understand.*

In the words of my text, you are informed of the *authority* under which the angels acted—and of the *object* of the judgments which they poured out from the vials. The authority is that of Jehovah-Jesus, the Prince of the kings of the earth. He who upholds the pillars of the world, speaks with power; and the angels obey—*And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, go your ways.**

* "This," says Mr. Thomas Reader, in his REMARKS ON THE PROPHETIC PART OF THE REVELATION, a work of considerable merit, "this *voice* declared the will of God, and the united desire of his people."

From this writer I quote a paragraph to show his view of the character of the angels, and the living creature, which gave to them the vials. "These *seven angels, having the seven* last *plagues*, ver. 6, 7. being called to offer a dreadful sacrifice to the justice of God, were *clothed* in robes of 'more than bare innocence;' viz.

The object of God's wrath is the antichristian system—*pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.*

EARTH, it has been shown in the exposition of the *second seal*, hath, in common language, a variety of significations: and it may be added in this place, that

with pure and shining linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles, to denote the firmness, dignity, and splendour, with which they will perform this dreadful work; see chap. i. 13. And, that it might appear what power God's ministers have with him over their enemies, and that the work which these angels were going about, was the avenging of his persecuted servants, *one of the four living creatures*—(But lest any of them should, through unbelief, suppose himself incapable of such an honour, the Lord has not informed us whether it was he who resembled the lion, the ox, the man, or the eagle) *gave to the seven angels seven vials*, that is, censers, cups, or bottles, *full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever;* the unchanging enemy of every impenitent immortal, who has dared to take up arms against him and his Christ, chap. viii. 5. So David, by his prayers, gave the angels those vials which they poured upon his enemies, Psa. xxxv. 5, 6. and Isaiah and Hezekiah gave that vial to the angel, which he poured upon the 185,000 Assyrians, Isa. xxxvii. And when these vials are to be poured out, God will put it into the heart of some gospel minister, or *of a set of ministers of similar dispositions, firmly to believe, and therefore to desire of God by prayer, the execution of this vengeance;* which may properly be called their *giving the vials to the angels*, though we have no reason to suppose that these angels will visibly appear to him or them, when they are going about this work. God bottles the tears of his saints, not only to be witnesses of the sincerity of their love to him, but also to make them vials of his wrath on the heads of their enemies, Psa. lvi. 7. For *shall not God avenge his own elect, who cry day and night unto him? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily*, Luke xviii. 7, 8. as he promised to the souls under the altar, chap. vi. 10, 11." *Reader on the Prophecies of Revelation*, p. 217. Lond. 1778.

the New Testament employs γη, the word rendered *earth* in this text, in different senses.

There is no difficulty, however, in ascertaining its use, when the connexion is otherwise easily understood. Parkhurst, in his Greek and English Lexicon to the New Testament, gives it six distinct significations, exclusively of the symbolical—*Ground*, whether cultivated or barren; *dry land*, as distinguished from the waters; *a particular tract* or country; *the land of Canaan*, spiritually denoting heaven; *the terraqueous globe*, as distinguished from the heavens; and *ground* in general. It is obvious, that however numerous the shades of difference may be, there is no effort in ordinary cases necessary to decide in which sense we are to receive this word. Upon the same principle, the shades of difference, in the symbolical use of *earth*, must be ascertained from the context.

The *earth*, which is the object of all the vials, comprehends the earth, the sea, the fountains, the sun, the seat of the beast, the Euphrates, and the air, which are the several distinct objects of the seven vials; and although the word *earth*, in both the first and second verses, is symbolical, the sense of the one must be distinguished from that of the other. In the first instance, it is obviously the symbol of some *complete system*, having, in allusion to the system of the world, its land, water, sun, and atmosphere, &c. In the second instance it is a *part* of this system—An earth within the earth, and the one clearly distinguished from the other. A man of science can readily distinguish in *the same earth*, through which the ploughman digs his furrow, not only earths from

other substances, but also earth from earth: and it becomes the intelligent expositor of prophecy to distinguish the several acceptations of symbolical expressions without pretending, with Mr. Faber, * that the same symbol always points out the same definite object. This excellent commentator has certainly failed as much as Mr. Galloway, whose five significations of the word *earth*, he rejects, in his attempt to fix, as he says himself, *with remarkable precision, the invariable meaning of the symbol*—the "*territorial dominions of the Roman empire.*"

I cannot by any means admit, that *territory*, as such, provokes or bears the wrath of God. The ground is never cursed but on account of its criminal occupant. The Roman territory is, indeed, the residence of that upon which the plagues of the vials are inflicted: but the *formal object* of divine vengeance, is that *pernicious and criminal system of social order*, in both church and state, which is established among the guilty population of the Roman territories. This great public immorality, practised under the name of Christianity, and yet diametrically opposed to the Spirit and power of the religion of Jesus Christ, is what brings down upon its votaries the wrath of God. It is this system in all its complex, ecclesiastical, and political machinery, embracing the inhabitants of the western Roman world, that is symbolized by THE EARTH,† and is called,

* I allude to his note of criticism on Mr. Galloway, Vol. I. p. 66.

† Earth is opposed to heaven. The antichristian system is, therefore, as properly designated by *earth*, as Christianity is by the term *heaven*. "The kingdom of God."—"the kingdom of hea-

from its true character, by the strictly appropriate name,

THE ANTICHRISTIAN SYSTEM.

It includes, the beasts of the pit, of the sea, and of the earth; the head, the horns, the image of the beast; the mother of harlots, and all who are drunken with the cup of her intoxication. It is not precisely the emperor, the kings, or any of the kings, nor the people, nor the pope, nor the Roman church, nor the territorial dominions of the pope, or of the emperor; but it is all these, combined by a corrupt religion, embodied with despotic power, in opposition to the public social order which Christianity demands of the nations of the world, and which shall be actually established in the millennium.

That, which prevents in Europe the establishment of the millennial system, is of course to be destroyed by the vials; because the vials introduce the millennium: the millennial state of society is peculiarly the kingdom of Christ; and whatsoever is opposed to the coming of that kingdom, is opposed to himself, and is of course antichristian; therefore is the immoral organization of human society, which resists the principles of true religion in church and

ven," does not signify the *territory* occupied by pious men; but the *system of the grace of God*, dispensed to men, and separating them from the world, by reducing them into a church state. The church of God is the kingdom of heaven, because its *origin* and its nature are heavenly: the opposite system is the earth, because its nature is earthly, carnal, and perishing.

state, justly called by way of eminence, the antichrist. This consideration justifies the application of the term *antichristian*, agreeable to the practice of the reformers, to the prominent parts of that system of iniquity, which these holy men were in the habits, at the risk of their lives, of opposing.

It is the design of this discourse to explain the term antichrist, and accordingly justify this application of it—to explain from other parts of scripture the nature of the antichristian system—and to obviate the great objection, made of late, to this protestant use of the expression.

I. *Explain the term antichrist*, and justify its application to the Roman tyranny and superstition.

Had Mr. Faber succeeded much better than he has done, in fastening upon the prophet Daniel the charge of predicting the rise and progress of his own *infidel king*, he had no right, even upon this hypothesis, to apply exclusively to France the antichrist of the apostle John, and so, boldly charge our pious reformers with the misapplication of this remarkable expression. I readily admit that France, whether republican or imperial in her form of civil polity, is an antichristian power: but this admission does not, by any means, preclude the propriety of applying the same epithet to other powers hostile to the kingdom of Messiah; nor does it even require its application by way of eminence to a system which, however vile, cannot endure more than sixty years,

and which is confessedly more destructive to the enemies of the gospel than to true believers. This is the case with modern France, its principal enemies being judges. It is admitted by Mr. Faber himself, although he denounces Buonaparte and revolutionary France as the antichrist, that they perish before 1866.*

We ought to take it as an indisputable fact, that the most formidable opposition, which is ever made under the Christian name, to true religion, is the antichrist; because this idea is admitted in all its force by the apostle John himself. 1 John 2. *Ye have heard that antichrist shall come—whereby we know that it is the* LAST TIME. From these words it appears that antichrist was familiarly expected to appear under the gospel dispensation *the last time.* It is also apparent that this expectation was general among Christians in the age of the apostles. Now it is to me altogether incredible that this should be the case if the antichrist be *revolutionary France,* as distinguished from the great and prevalent superstitions and tyrannies of the European nations. A thing so remote from that age; of so very short continuance; of so very little interest in itself to the best and purest churches in any age; and which is confessedly a wo to the enemies of the true religion,—such a thing, however vile in itself, could not excite such universal expectations; nor be at all so very

* In doing this, he acts more as an *Englishman* than as an expositor of prophecy. We give more credit to him for his patriotism than for his orthodoxy.

interesting to the primitive church as to occupy her principal attention. We have the testimony of Jerome too, in proof of this striking fact, that such expectation continued general among Christians down to his own time, and that it was supported by the prophecies of Daniel, as well as the writings of the New Testament.*

Antichrist

Signifies an *opposite Christ*, from αντι, against, and χριστος, Christ. ὁ Αντιχριστος, the opposer of Christ, under pretence of being himself appointed or anointed of the Lord. Thus, the grand opposition to the Christian system is personified according to the prophetic style of king, horn, beast, &c. for kingdom, power, empire. In this sense, the antichrist is generally understood by all writers, and while agreeably to the apostle John's declaration, 1 John ii. 18. there are many *antichrists*, many opposers of Christ, it is not doubted that prophecy directs to one great system of opposition which should arise under the Christian dispensation, as pointed out by this name.

* Jerome *Hieronymus* flourished in the fourth century, and is universally esteemed as one of the most learned and judicious of the *Fathers*. He hath these words on the celebrated passage, Dan. xi. 36.

Ab hoc loco, Judæi dici de antichristo putant—quod quidem et nos de antichristo intelligimus. Porphyrius autem et cæteri qui sequuntur eum, de Antiocho Epiphane dici arbitrantur.—Quæ universa in typo antichristi, nostri præcessisse contendunt; qui sessurus est in templo Dei, et se facturus ut Deum. *Hieron. Col.* 1129—1131.

Different opinions of Antichrist.

1. The Jewish nation. *Dr. Whitby's opinion.*
2. The Gnostics and their successors. *Dr. Hammond's.*
3. Heathen Rome. *Bossuet's*, and other papists.
4. Individual persons. { *Nero, Trajan, Louis XIV. Oliver Cromwell, King George III. Napoleon Buonaparte, &c.* are in turn said to be antichrist by their opponents.
5. The Papacy. *General opinion of protestants.*
6. The present French empire. *Faber's.*

Besides these, twenty different opinions might be collected from those fanciful writers, who very improperly amuse themselves, by inventing theories, at the expense of important, and even awful truths. It appears to me, that expositors generally, have taken antichrist in a view, rather too much insulated. Instead of exhibiting a *single adversary*, or any *one branch* of the great apostacy, the word is to be taken in a more generic sense, as descriptive of that long-enduring hostility to religion, which has hitherto passed among the nations for Christianity itself.

This word (Αντιχριστος) occurs in four different places in the New Testament. It is used only in the epistolary writings of the apostle John. Those epistles were written within a few years of the end of the first century, about 60 years after the organization of the Christian church, and 20 after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

It signifies one who is opposed to Christ, and is, in its general sense, applicable to any enemy of the Redeemer. The passages in which it occurs, are 1 John ii. 18. and 22. chap. iv. 3. and 2 John 7. From these verses, it appears that this name was intended as an especial designation of some noted opposition to the gospel. The Christian church, about the time in which these epistles of John were written, certainly understood by "the antichrist" (ὁ Αντιχριστος) some character, revealed in prophecy, as the principal opponent of Christ's kingdom.

1 John ii. 18. *Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.* In this verse, the word occurs twice; once in the singular, and once in the plural number. The apostle asserts a fact—*it is the last time.* He appeals in confirmation of this assertion to a prophecy that in the last times such a character should appear, and to the fact that such characters did now appear—*Whereby we know that it is the last time.* But, if the church had not previously received undoubted information that a particular kind of hostility, designated by this term, would have been offered to the gospel at the last dispensation, which the Redeemer should make of his grace, it could not have been inferred, from the appearance of opposition, that these times were now arrived. We must therefore conclude from this text, that the Christian church had actually received information that a certain species of opposition to the kingdom of Christ would be offered, after the gospel dispensation had

commenced; and that several instances of a similar kind of opposition had really appeared, before the canon of scripture was completed, and before all the apostles had been removed from the earth. *There are now many antichrists.* Several characters already appear opposed to the true religion, of the same description with that character who is known as *the antichrist*, by way of eminence.

Verse 22. *He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son.* The venerable apostle declares in the context, that every error is opposed to the true religion, "*that no lie is of the truth;*" and, in the beginning of this verse, he asserts, that he who denieth Christ is a *liar*, in the most awful sense of the word. *Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ!* Christ, or Messiah, which is the same word, (the former Greek, and the latter Hebrew,) signifies *anointed*, and is of course expressive of the character and office of the Saviour. An assertion of erroneous sentiments, therefore, respecting the official character and works of the blessed Redeemer, is the worst species of falsehood; and that character which thus denies the Father and the Son, is *the antichrist.* This also shows, that the church must have then known that the term antichrist designated the head of the most formidable opposition which the gospel had to encounter.

Chap. iv. 3. *Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that Spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world.*

A good spirit is of God, and an evil spirit is that which is not of him. Trying the spirits is a neces-

sary duty, verse 1. and the reason is assigned, because there are many false prophets. The criterion is given in the second verse—"Every Spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." This expression, *Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*, means something more than that a person, by that name, appeared in Judea. The expression comprehends the doctrine of his person, of his office, and of his works, as our Redeemer. Otherwise it could be no criterion. False prophets, as well as the true, might acknowledge the *fact*, that there was such a man as Christ Jesus. The evil spirits which he drove out of those who were possessed, acknowledged his power when he appeared in the flesh. Matt. viii. 29. "Jesus, thou Son of God, art thou come hither to torment us?" This text is to be understood, therefore, as implying more than what the words appear to express. By this rule similar texts are explained. Acts ii. 21. "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." That is, whosoever shall worship him in faith. For "he who believeth not shall be damned," Matt. xvi. 16. Every spirit, therefore, which confesseth not the truth, respecting Christ's person and mission,—his whole mediatory character, is evil: and this is that spirit of antichrist.

The apostle John also appeals, in this passage, to the prophetic Revelation, which predicted to the church the coming of this enemy—*Whereof ye have heard that it should come;* and also to the information which they had received of his actual appearance,—*and even now already is it in the world.*

The conclusion from this passage of course is, that the church expected *opposition* from an enemy desig-

nated by the name *antichrist;* and that the spirit which antichrist possesses, would be opposed to the truth, respecting both the mediatorial character, and the object of his appearing in the flesh; together with the fact, that such a spirit began already to appear in the world. This conclusion is confirmed by 2 John verse 7. *For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.* To what system of *deception,* can we, with so much propriety, apply this designation, as to *the great Roman apostacy,* which affected nearly the whole civilized world?

We shall afterwards inquire, to what prophecy the apostle John refers the church in these passages; and so endeavour to ascertain that character, to whom the title antichrist especially belongs.

It has already been observed, that the word does not occur any where in scripture, except in the texts already quoted; and that it designates some character, the most conspicuous opposer of the religion of Jesus. From the use the apostle John makes of this expression, it appears that it was familiar to those whom he addressed. It is not, however, certain, by what means it became so. Whether it was first applied by an inspired teacher to the grand apostacy which was expected in some future period, or whether the term was at first adopted as applicable of every one who opposed the gospel, and according to the common progress of language, became at last by usage appropriate to the most remarkable opposition offered to the church, we cannot now determine. It is, however, certain, that the prophets foretold this remarkable opposition to the Christian church; and

that, at a very early period, this opposition was known by the name ANTICHRIST.

In order to answer the question, Who is the antichrist? it will be necessary to quote some of the prophecies which predict opposition to the gospel, and compare them with those texts already quoted, in which this term is used. This will lead me,

II. *To explain from other parts of scripture, the nature of the antichristian system.*

I shall confine my selection to the writings of Paul and Daniel: and shall begin with the New Testament authority, as being more contiguous to the time in which the epistles of John were written. Two passages will suffice.

1. I shall lay before you the words of the apostle, to a church which he had himself planted and watered, and in which he appeals to the information which he had previously communicated in his discourses. 2 Thess. ii. 3—9. *That day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way: and then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit*

of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, &c. &c.

This epistle was written about the year 56, and the epistles of John about the year 90. Before the latter writer, therefore, described THE ANTICHRIST, he must have been familiar with THE MAN OF SIN, described in the writings of a fellow-labourer in the doctrines of the gospel. There is no doubt of his having the epistles of Paul in his possession thirty years before he wrote his own epistles.

John's *antichrists* had already begun to appear; and Paul's *mystery of iniquity* had already begun to work. Of the coming of John's antichrist they had heard before; and of Paul's *man of sin*, he had himself formerly told them many things. John's antichrist, with a *spirit of falsehood and deceit*, denied both the Father and the Son: and Paul's man of sin, coming with *signs and lying wonders*, sitteth in the temple of God, and exalteth himself above all that is called God, and that is worshipped. The character which John describes is eminently *the opposite Christ*, (ὁ Αντιχριστος;) and that which Paul describes, sitteth in the temple, *showing himself that he is God.* Are not then, these characters identified? Could the primitive Christians do otherwise than consider them one and the same opposition to Christ and his cause upon earth? It is no objection to this sentiment, that John's antichrist *denies that Christ has come in the flesh;* for he who is *opposed to all that is worshipped*, and *as God sitteth in the temple of God*, so far from doing less, does much more than this. And, as for infidelity, we shall

find to the full as many infidels on the papal chair, and on the thrones of Europe, as have appeared at the head of affairs in revolutionary France.

I do not propose to you a commentary on this passage from the epistle to the Thessalonians. It is taken for granted that it applies to the Roman system of superstition. Mr. Faber admits this, and bishop Newton has an excellent dissertation on the text. A wicked apostacy, coming after the working of Satan, with deceit, and false miracles; usurping power in the Christian church to so great a degree as to claim titles and honours due only unto God; and making use of that power in opposition to the only object of religious worship, and for the corruption of Christianity among the nations, cannot apply in full to any object which excludes the system of Roman iniquity. This system personified, is the son of perdition, who betrayed the Lord, as did Judas Iscariot. It is the mystery of iniquity, which began early to work in the unhallowed ambition of worldly-minded ecclesiastics; in the superstition of ignorant minds, who from other causes than a saving knowledge of the truth, made a profession of Christianity; and in the industrious efforts of public men in office, throughout the departments of the Roman empire, to make religion an instrument of political power. But to the establishment of this mystery of iniquity, on the throne of the *fourth kingdom* of the earth, there was an insuperable barrier, while Paganism remained in full force. This obvious consideration the apostle Paul had explained to the Thessalonians. *Ye know what withholdeth, that the man of sin be revealed.* It is heathen power *that letteth, and will let,*

till he be taken out of the way. Then when the empire becomes Christian, this impediment shall be removed. After this cometh the APOSTACY, *that wicked whom the Lord shall consume.*

This prophecy both explains the character of the antichrist of John, and shows the propriety of applying that name to the *grand apostacy* of the western empire.*

2. I shall, in confirmation of this interpretation of the antichrist, lay before you the words of the apostle Paul to his son Timothy, in which he contrasts the *mystery of iniquity*, which he had described to the Thessalonians, with the *mystery of godliness*, described to Timothy at the close of the third chapter.

1 Tim. iv. 1—3. *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils: speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, &c.* This epistle was written about the year 60, four years after the date of that which was addressed to the Christians of Thessalonica, and about 30 years earlier than the epistles of John the divine. Here also there is intimation of a *great apostacy*, which shall take place *in the latter times.*

In writing to Timothy, Paul would not forget that the evangelist had been previously acquainted with what the apostle had taught concerning the MYSTERY OF INIQUITY, both in his discourses and his writings.

* See a plain and correct commentary on 2 Thess. ii. 3—9. in Scot's Family Bible.

In the epistle containing the remarkable passage, recently under consideration, *Timothy*, as well as *Sylvanus*, had joined with the apostle Paul, and could not of course be ignorant of the *great apostacy*, which is described as opposing God and the pure worship of his holy name. Admitting, therefore, that Timothy previously knew of the Roman apostacy, which the apostle calls the *man of sin*, and *son of perdition, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all deceivableness of unrighteousness*, is it possible that he should misunderstand the words of Paul to himself, or ever think of applying them to a different object?

In the first verse, the apostle affirms this fact to be a matter of divine prediction—*the Spirit speaketh expressly*. He then assures us that this event—the same with that designated as the *man of sin*, occupies the same period—*in the latter times:* he describes this event in each place by the same terms—*a falling away:** he assigns the same cause for the event in both places—*the working of Satan*, or *seducing spirits:* he gives to it, in both cases the same moral character—*all deceivableness of unrighteousness, and strong delusion, speaking lies in hypocrisy, and having the conscience seared:*† and in addition to the extraordinary characteristic of usurping in the very temple itself divine honour, in order more effectually under the mask of Christianity to oppose the worship and the God of the Christians, the apostle

* Ἡ Αποστασια, 2 Thess. ii. 3. Αποστησονται, 1 Tim. iv. 1.

† The moral and religious character of this period is also described, 2 Tim. iii. 1—5.

Paul gives another pointed and distinctive feature of the same system of abomination in this passage—*forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats.* Here we have a prediction of the laws of celibacy, nunneries, and monasteries, as well as of the superstitious abstinence of *Lent* and other holydays.

While I refer the reader for a more copious exposition of this text to the common Commentaries, and particularly to Mr. Mede and bishop Newton, I proceed to observe that John the divine, when he drew the character of his antichrist had this apostacy before him. We have shown the coincidence of the passage from 1 John, with that from 2 Thessalonians, and the coincidence of the latter with that from 1 Timothy: the passage from 1 Timothy must of course, coincide with that from the epistles of John.

John's antichrist was the subject of scripture predictions already in the possession of the church; and of this apostacy the Spirit of God had already spoken expressly. Antichrist was to appear in the last times; and so was this. The antichrist of John, as his name imports, is an opposite religion, denying the doctrine of the Father and his Son Jesus Christ; and this apostacy is a departure from the faith with a seared conscience, substituting the *doctrines of devils,** in its stead. Who is a liar; but the antichrist of John? This man of sin also, speaketh lies in hypocrisy.

* Doctrines of Devils. Διδασκαλιαις Δαιμονιων. The doctrines of the church of Rome, are in this passage denominated doctrines of devils, not because they are from the great adversary of our salvation, but because they introduce the worship of demons instead of the worship of God: doctrines relating to the worship of demons. Δαιμονιον is from Δαιμων, and that from Δαιω, or ידע to *know.* A

3. I shall quote in this connexion one passage from the prophecies of Daniel: and I shall previously call your recollection to this fact, that the book of Daniel was both well known and well understood by the apostle Paul when he addressed his epistles to the church of Thessalonica, and to Timothy the evangelist. In order that the coincidence of expressions may appear more obvious, I shall compare them with one another in parallel columns.

great part of the heathen idolatry consisted in the worship of demons, and their doctrines of religion were, of course, doctrines which respected these objects of their worship. This explains the expression, *doctrines of devils.*

Plato explains the doctrine. "Every demon is a middle being between God and man. All the commerce and intercourse between gods and men is performed by the mediation of demons. Demons are reporters and carriers from men to the gods, and again from the gods to men, of the supplications and prayers of the one, and of the injunctions and rewards of devotion from the other." See *Parkhurst's Lexicon.*

The doctrine of demons, as explained by so distinguished a philosopher, serves to throw light upon those parts of scripture, which represent the heathen as worshipping devils. This is the scriptural account of their sacrifices in every age from Moses to Paul. Deut. xxxii. 17. *They sacrificed unto devils, not to God.* 1 Cor. x. 20. *But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.*

The question will naturally occur, Where did the heathen find these mediators, *their demons*, whom they worshipped? They answer this question themselves. Plato says, and in this he confirms what Hesiod had said before him, "When *good men die*, they attain great honour and dignity, and become *demons.*" They *deified*, or *canonized*, *men* after death. This abundantly shows the applicability of this prophecy to that system of religion which canonizes the dead, that they may be honoured by the living as mediators between them and the Most High.

Daniel xi. 36—38.	Paul's words { 2 Thess. ii. 3—10. 1 Tim. iv. 1—3.
36. And the king shall do according to his will, and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation shall be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.	—That man of sin—the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God—the mystery of iniquity doth already work—and then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, &c.
37. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.	—Whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders—forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received.
38. But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces; and a God whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.	—Giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy—and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.

Nothing short of a fondness for preconceived opinions could induce any attentive reader of these quotations to deny their application to one great system of iniquity.

The prophecy of Daniel is the first in order, and is more definite than those which follow. The apostles Paul and John, proceed upon the supposition that the object is specifically pointed out already, and refer to it only with design to keep alive the attention of the church to it, and to prevent misunderstanding of its character.

In the *second and seventh chapters* of Daniel, we are furnished with a chronological account of the four universal empires, and of the dismemberment of the *fourth*, the Roman, into ten separate kingdoms. After this dismemberment, the Roman empire is still contemplated as *one*, being bound as to its several distinct members into *one system of cruel opposition to the kingdom of Christ*, and destined to continue in this character until the way is prepared for the coming of the millennium.

In this chapter, that prophet gives such a minute prospective history of the Persian and Macedonian empires, with a comprehensive account of the affairs of the kings of Syria and Egypt, until the establishment of Roman power in the east, that infidel writers, admitting the accuracy of the prophecy, have been compelled, rather than acknowledge the inspiration of the scriptures, to affirm that Daniel's prophecies were composed after the events came to pass.*

* "The prophecies of Daniel were in many instances so exactly accomplished, that those persons who would have otherwise

After having introduced to our view, the Roman power, commanding *Antiochus Epiphanes* to retire from Egypt, and at the same time conquering the kingdom of Macedon, the fundamental kingdom of the Greek empire, Daniel ceases to describe the events of the *third beast*, because his reign is now terminated. He begins, of course, in the 31st verse to predict the actions of the *fourth beast*, and continues that description until the era of his entire overthrow, preparatory to the establishment of the kingdom of Christ in its millennial splendour.

"Hitherto," said Sir Isaac Newton, "Daniel described the actions of the kings of the *north* and *south;* but upon the conquest of Macedon by the Romans, he left off describing the actions of the Greeks, and began to describe those of the Romans."* Jerome informs us, that the Jews themselves understood the predictions of the 31st verse, to point out the Roman power, after the time of

been unable to resist the evidence which they furnished in support of our religion, have not scrupled to affirm, that they must have been written subsequent to these occurrences, which they so faithfully describe. But this groundless and unsupported assertion of Porphyry, who in the third century wrote against Christianity, serves but to establish the character of Daniel as a great and enlightened prophet; and *Porphyry*, by confessing and proving from the best historians, that all which is included in the *eleventh* chapter of Daniel, relative to the kings of the north and of the south, of *Syria* and of *Egypt*, was truly, and in every particular, acted and done in the order there related, has undesignedly contributed to the reputation of those prophecies, of which he attempted to destroy the authenticity." *Gray's Key to the Old Testament*, p. 338. Dublin, 1792.

* Observations on Daniel, p. 183. Dublin, 1733.

Antiochus, and before the coming of antichrist.* In the following summary, Mr. Faber gives the contents of verses 31—35. "To state the whole argument more briefly; the events succeed each other in the following order. In the 31st verse of the xith chapter, Daniel predicts the desolation of Jerusalem by the Romans: in the 32d and 33d verses the persecutions of the primitive Christians: in the 34th verse, the conversion of the empire under Constantine: and in the 35th verse, the papal persecutions of the witnesses."†

In the 36th verse, where my quotation from Daniel commences, the prophet begins to describe the character of that power, by which these persecutions were authorized—The power which was to appear, as the *fourth beast*, after the time of Constantine, and which is to exist, under some form, *until he come to his end, and none shall help him*, verse 45.

By reviewing the comparison of this power with the passages selected from the writings of Paul, it will appear that Daniel's fourth king in his present state coincides with Paul's man of sin, under that apostacy which succeeded the overthrow of heathen Rome, and the dismemberment of the empire.

* "Judæi autem hoc nec de Antiocho Epiphane, nec de Antichristo, sed de Romanis intelligi volunt. Post multa, inquit, tempora de ipsis Romanis, qui Ptolemæo venere auxilio, et Antiocho comminati sunt, consurget rex Vespasianus, surgent brachia ejus et semina, Titus filius cum exercitu; et polluent sanctuarium, auferentique Jude sacrificium, et templum tradent æternæ solitudini." *Hieron.* Coll. 1129.

Much more, to the same purpose, may be seen by consulting Mede, or bishop Newton, on this part of Daniel.

† Vol. I. p. 302.

1. The one, *exalteth himself, and magnifieth himself, above every God, and speaketh marvellous things against the God of gods:* the other, *opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*

As to daring impiety, and actual opposition to God, and to religion, the two characters are precisely the same. Additional features of irreligion are, however, ascribed to this power, in the description of the apostle. The *man of sin*, opposeth each person of the godhead in his personal properties and offices in the Christian economy—*all that is called God, or that is worshipped;* and thus, the man of sin is identified with John's antichrist, even more clearly than is Daniel's king, *denying both the Father and the Son:* and all this is done under the profession of Christianity, usurping power over the church—*so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is* ANTI-*God*, THE ANTICHRIST.

2. Daniel's king, *regardeth not the God of his fathers*, while professedly claiming from the Fathers the apostolical succession and power: Paul's son of perdition, *cometh after the working of Satan, with all power and lying wonders*, false miracles to deceive men, as if he possessed apostolical authority.

Both serve Satan, disregard God, and claim the religion and miraculous power of the Fathers.

3. The description of the prophet represents the enemy, *as regarding not the desire of women, nor any God, magnifying himself above all*—performing acts,

and publishing laws, which contradict and set aside the obligation of the divine law: the description of the apostle coincides with this, by specifying the particular instances—*Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received.*

To be *regardless* of the *desire of women,* as also regardless of God, are the characteristics of that law which enjoins celibacy upon a great part of the population of the different countries of Europe—the clergy, monks, and nuns. The nuptial state is the desire of women as well as of men; and if there be more modesty and chaste affection in the female character, it is even more so. The nuptial state is *peculiarly* the desire of women. God himself hath said, and ordained, that this should be the case. Gen. iii. 16. *Unto the woman he said—thy* DESIRE *shall be to thy husband.*

4. The power described by Daniel is an *idolatrous* power, and the superstitious homage employed, is characterized as very splendid and costly—*He shall honour the* GOD OF FORCES; *and a God whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones.* The system described by the apostle Paul is also *idolatrous,* as well as hypocritical—*Giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.*

The *doctrines of demons,* we have already explained.* The honouring of the GOD OF FORCES, *un-*

* See Page 275.

known to the fathers of the church, under whom the man of sin claims, is precisely this *demon-worship*, borrowed from the heathen, and actually antichristian, being a *denial of the only mediator Jesus Christ*, by substituting others in his place. The words which we render in Daniel xi. 38. *the God of forces*, and which this impious power should honour *in his estate*, are אלה מעזים. They are translated by Arius Montanus, *Deum Mahuzzim*. Matthew Pool, after giving from various authors five different commentaries upon this expression, gives the *sixth*, as that to which he himself accedes. MAHUZZIM, "signifies the *demons, or the gods protectors*, which the church of Rome worships along with Christ, supposing that the saints and angels are such."* This interpretation is illustrated to great extent by the bishop of Bristol; and is much more conformable to fact than the modern turn given to the passage by Mr. Faber, representing the Mahuzzim as French liberty. מעזים is from עז which signifies strength; and may be rendered the *hosts* or *forces*. These *forces* correspond precisely with the *demons* of Plato, and the *papal saints*, who are appointed to preside over this country, and that, as delusion may direct.

Splendid and extravagant have been the expenditures of arts and of wealth, made for the purpose of maintaining this idolatry; and it requires no argument to convince the intelligent reader of Daniel's

* Significat dæmones, sive deos protectores, quos Romani cum Christo coluerunt; quales sanctos et angelos esse supponunt." SYNOPSIS CRITICORUM, &c.

prophecy, that the latter part of the description is perfectly conformable to the event—*And he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.* "Yea, he shall distribute the earth among his Mahuzzim; so that besides several patrimonies which in every country he shall allot to them, he shall share whole kingdoms and provinces among them: Saint George shall have England, Saint Andrew, Scotland; Saint Dennis, France; Saint James, Spain; Saint Mark, Venice, &c. and bear rule as presidents and patrons of their several countries." These are the words of Mr. Mede, in explaining this text. Bishop Newton applies it, however, not to the *supposed saints* themselves, but to the *bishops, and priests, and monks, &c.* who every where promoted this idolatry. "Their authority and jurisdiction have extended over the purses and consciences of men; they have been enriched with noble buildings, and large endowments, and have had the choicest of the lands appropriated for church lands. These are points of such public notoriety, that they require no proof, as they will admit of no denial."*

I flatter myself, brethren, that I have now furnished you with sufficient scriptural evidence of the identity of antichrist, with the whole mystery of iniquity; with that great apostacy of the Roman empire, which sits in the temple as an opposite God, and which prohibits by law the nuptial state, and the use of meats, which God hath provided for men. You will also have observed, that this description

* Newton on the Prophecies, Vol. I. p. 372. New-York, 1794

embraces, in one complex system, the church and civil state, together with the tyrannical acts, and the superstitious services, employed by both the political and ecclesiastical power united over the nations. This will justify me in designating the whole as *antichristian*, and in representing it as the *symbolical earth*, upon which all the vials are poured out.

I must trespass, nevertheless, a little longer upon your time and attention, while,

III. *I obviate the objections made of late to this use of the term antichrist.*

These objections, as made by Mr. Faber, require a reply. He is too able and valuable an expositor, to be treated with neglect by a subsequent interpreter of the predictions of the Apocalypse. Upon the subject of the *great apostacy* of the European nations, we have no dispute with him. He follows the track marked out by Mr. Mede, and pursued by the two Newtons, and the whole host of protestant commentators, in designating the leading features of that *system of iniquity*, which unites, in the chains of tyranny and superstition, the several kingdoms of the Latin Roman Empire, although he labours to prove, that the antichrist of the epistles of John, and Daniel's king, apply exclusively to *revolutionary France*. The magnitude of the evils connected with that event, its threatening aspect toward his native country, the powerful antipathies of an English royalist, and the force of political prejudices, if they do not justify, will easily account for the bias

under which he brought his dissertations before the public:* and very probably, if the British administration had not been irreconcileably hostile to the emancipation of the *Irish Catholics*, so ardent a partizan as Mr. Faber would not, while his countrymen

* The recent English expositors have greatly diminished the value of their publications, by permitting themselves to indulge so much of the spirit of political partiality. They must err, it seems, upon one side or the other.

Since the greater part of these lectures have been delivered from the pulpit, I have been favoured by a friend with the perusal of another explanation of the Revelation, by an Englishman, of rather more fire, and less discretion, than Mr. Faber. He is on the opposite side in politics—*the Rev. James Brown, D. D. of Barnwell, Northamptonshire.*

This work bears evident marks of having been published in 1811, or 1812. It is a work of genius; and yet it is very unworthy of a rank among the best expositions of the Apocalypse. The author accompanied, probably as a chaplain, the British army sent for the reduction of American liberty; and yet he is himself a violent whig. I quote from his work the following as a specimen. It will rival any thing Faber has written against the rulers of France.

"If the *beast*, in form like a lamb; yet spake as a dragon, acted as a demon, and hath his portion assigned him with the devil and the first beast;—who will doubt, notwithstanding their candid show, and plausible pretences, that a North, a Germain, a Sandwich, and other supporters of their counsels, who for seven years, at the expense of the lives of many thousands of British subjects, deluged America with the blood of her inhabitants, contending for freedom, and the natural rights of man, are in the sight of heaven more guilty, and obnoxious to a severer doom, than all the private murderers England has produced since it was a nation.

"Is there one individual in the empire, who is not now suffering under those corrupt and rapacious principles, which have dictated the councils of this country for near a century past?—those vultures only excepted, who now fatten on her vitals, or those who, already gorged with her blood, and loaded with ravin, have retired

were spending their treasure and their blood, in support of what is confessedly the mystery of iniquity, among the *Spanish* Catholics, have so unequivocally condemned the spirit of popery itself.

The three *general objections* which Mr. Faber offers to the interpretation of bishop Newton, apply only to the manner, the *indefiniteness* of his interpretation: but do not in the least degree, affect the propriety of applying this prophecy of Daniel to the antichristian system. His objections are, that the bishop *makes this last prediction little more than a repetition of a former one—that the interpretation is in want of unity*—and *that it violates the chronological order.*

to their nests to devour and enjoy their prey—while the profuse courtier, and pampered appendant of office, is straining his low fancy to invent new objects of vanity and luxurious indulgence, to exhaust his countless treasures, the poor peasant and his family is pining in want, or a beggarly dependant on parochial supply. A state of society, so subversive of the essential laws of nature and Providence, cannot long exist. And however those who have been the means of introducing it, may escape punishment from men, and however *much they may have glorified themselves, and lived deliciously*—if we rightly understand this passage of scripture—*so much the more torment and sorrow*, so much the severer punishment is denounced against them, by the righteous judgment of God," page 141—145. See also his remark on Mr. Pitt, page 142.

"From the politics we have been so perseveringly and so successfully pursuing for half a century past, we may plainly perceive, that no ministry who will not support this profusion in the court and this corruption in the parliament, will ever be permitted to continue in office. Is there any man at this day so blind as not to see, that from the Archbishop of Canterbury to the lowest exciseman, the very suspicion of a partiality to the interest of the country and of the people, in preference to the designs of the court, is an absolute disqualification for any office?"

Repetitions, however, are often made in the scripture, and are besides frequently necessary; seeing the same object occurs in several different connexions, and must be viewed in different respects. There is no necessary violation of *unity* in applying the prophecy to the man of sin; Newton's fault being too complicated, may be easily corrected. The *chronology* of that prophecy is not at all deranged, by the description, in the succeeding verses, of the persecuting power referred to in the 35th. And besides, a key to the chronology is furnished in this very text, compared with verse 40th, *the time of the end*. The persecutions of the *men of understanding* were to continue by verse 35th, to the time of the end; and by verse 40th, it is at this very time that the *king* is attacked by those powers which are to be in part the instruments of his destruction. The intermediate description must, of course, belong to that power which waged the persecuting war upon the saints.

The *particular objections*, urged from the text itself, against our interpretation, have been already in part anticipated. Mr. Faber's remarks upon the *desire of women*, and the *Mahuzzim*, are rather ingenious than solid. We have no objections that the words, the *desire of women*, be understood to signify *that which women desire;* but we insist upon it, that this very expression as strongly indicates the *nuptial state*, as if the words were the *desire of men*. It is, however, astonishing, that a man of Mr. Faber's acquaintance with the history of the Latin apostacy, should doubt whether *any gain* accrued to the pa-

pacy, or the imperial power of this king, from parcelling out the country to the *Mahuzzim*, the demon saints, or the various orders of clergy. He had his PRICE for this; and an ample price it was. These ecclesiastical orders gave as the price of their establishments, both to the papacy and the civil power, much of the wealth and the liberties of the several countries of Europe: and what greater *gain* or *price* could they require. This expositor well knew that the *price* which a favoured priesthood is always expected to give for the royal bounty, is the allegiance of their people under all circumstances. Too, too faithfully, alas, has this price, this dear price, been paid to both princes and popes. They have long had at their disposal the purses and the persons of their deluded and oppressed subjects, throughout the several kingdoms of Europe.

In order to give any plausibility to the system of interpretation which Mr. Faber adopts, he is under the necessity of assuming, as a point from which to set out, a false fact: and we fear, it is for the sake merely of giving some excuse for insisting upon this false hypothesis, desirable for certain political purposes, that this scheme of exposition has at all been adopted. That false and gratuitous hypothesis is, that *imperial France is an infidel power.*

I call this a *false fact:* for I insist upon it, that France is still one of the antichristian powers of Europe; one of the horns of the beast; one of the kingdoms of the grand apostacy.

She has had, it is true, many infidel philosophers among her learned men; but so also have other na-

tions, not excepting her great rival, the British empire. Hume, and Shaftesbury, and Bolingbroke, and Gibbon, and Kaimes, were in nowise inferior, in industry and zeal against the gospel, to Voltaire, and Rosseau, and the French Œconomists. The *Illuminati* of Germany, the head of the empire, were no less addicted to infidelity than the French Jacobins; and perhaps the celebrated Frederic of Prussia, a royal tyrant of no mean rank among the nations, was not surpassed in attachment to infidelity by any of the Democrats of revolutionary France.

The truth is, that infidelity always has been, and always will be, the companion of gross superstition. "*This fiction of Jesus Christ*," said one of the popes of Rome, "*this fiction, how much we make by it!*"

Revolutionary France, however, went further. She made a national profession of Atheism. A declaration, without opposition, in the national convention, extinguished Christianity, and made death an eternal sleep. Shortly thereafter, the vote of the famous Robespierre destroyed Atheism, and established Deism as the religion of France. This was followed, at no distant period, by the mandate of another tyrant, re-establishing all the pageantry of the ancient superstition, and restoring France to the communion of the *man of sin*.*

When France was atheistical, the people had as much true religion as they had on the preceding

* How easily can a tyrant make a national religion? and of how little value is it in the sight of God, or in the estimation of good men, when thus made?

year; and they have as little, probably, to-day, as they had during the reign of *Robespierre.*

But France is no longer an *atheistical nation.* If a *decree* once made her so, the decree is rescinded. If, without such a decree, the irreligion of some of her principal scholars and statesmen made her so, the same cause universally prevalent among the nations, must make all the nations atheistical, in despite of their establishments. England was a Presbyterian kingdom, by a decree of parliament, for a few years of the seventeenth century. During the protectorship of Oliver Cromwell, England was a commonwealth, or republic. It would be to the full as correct, to call the English nation in the present day, a Presbyterian republic, although she is in fact, governed by a constitution, which combines the prelacy and the monarchy, as to call France, under her present constitution, an atheistical republic, or empire,

I conclude these remarks in the words of THE NEW EDINBURGH ENCYCLOPÆDIA, reviewing the opinion of Mr. Faber, under the article *antichrist.* "He maintains, that revolutionary France is antichrist; and that this formidable power was revealed in all its terrors, in the year 1792, when monarchy was abolished, and atheism openly avowed.—This opinion, it must be acknowledged, is supported by its author with great learning and ingenuity. But when we recollect, that most of the facts on which it is founded are drawn from the *fanciful and exaggerated* statements of Barruel; and that the abolition of monarchy, and the avowal of atheistical tenets, were

but the deed of a comparatively small number, actuated by a temporary phrenzy; and that the one was soon succeeded by the return of regular government, and the other by the re-establishment of the Christian religion,* we cannot feel disposed to attach much credit to the theory of Mr. Faber. It seems to derive its chief interest from the extraordinary value of the events which have lately taken place in France, and from the desire that we naturally, but illiberally feel, to load that country and its ruler with all that we have been accustomed, as a religious nation, to regard with most abhorrence; and consequently to justify upon system, the spirit of eternal warfare. There is, it is said, a large manuscript volume in the Bodleian Library, written to prove that Oliver Cromwell was the antichrist. This may appear very ridiculous to us, but it did not perhaps appear so to those who lived in the times of the usurpation. And in a century or two hence, Mr. Faber's book, so greedily swallowed by many of the present times, may be equally a subject of general wonder and pity."

CONCLUSION.

From the considerations, my brethren, which have now been suggested, we feel authorized in drawing the inference, that the several names, *antichrist*, *man of sin*, the *king doing his own will*,

* By regular government and the Christian religion, unto which this writer says, France returned, we are to understand, despotism and popery.

the *mystery of iniquity*, and the *apostacy of the latter days*, are all different names of the same great system of opposition to true religion; and that they all designate *that public prostitution of Christianity, which is connected with the fourth universal empire.*

I am the more anxious to impress this idea upon your minds, because the *adversary* of our salvation, in whose service, and by whose power, the antichristians carry on their seductions, is diligently occupied in diverting the attention of the witnesses of Christ from this principal impediment to a general reformation.

If he can succeed in begetting *infidelity*, and in rearing up this his own creature, to such an alarming height among the nations, as to attract the principal notice of the saints, and call forth their principal efforts, he can the more securely promote the antichristian delusion, upon which he places his chief dependence, in prolonging his own reign over the nations, and in preventing the progress of the religion of the Son of God.

Be not deceived by these acts, although they may have been already too far successful. From openly avowed infidelity, you have little to fear. With shameless effrontery that enemy stalks forth at noonday; but it is from a masked battery the foe does the greatest execution. The scriptural predictions are in this case our safest guide. They foretell, for our instruction, that the spirit of antichrist is that which we have most to fear, most to detest, most to oppose. Avowed atheism has little to recommend it, even to the fallen mind. It finds in human nature,

comparatively few principles upon which to ingraft its own scions. Man is naturally prone to reverence some invisible superior. It is upon "the sense of deity" in the depraved heart, that Satan rests his baneful superstition. From such superstition, we have more to fear, as individuals, and as members of society, than from actual atheism. Where one man has descended into the pit, denying the being of a God and of a future state, thousands have perished in false hope; have fallen blindfolded by error into the ditch; or, bound in the shackles of a false faith, have been dragged into the prison whence there is no redemption.

Infidelity affects society by a temporary phrenzy. It speedily produces, by its obvious evils, a cure to its own poison. But superstition, united with despotic power, holds a more successful sceptre. It is more than the magic wand of fairy tales, more than the witchcrafts and enchantments of ancient barbarism. It finds ready access to the corrupt heart; it imperceptibly insinuates its soul-ruining heresies; it decorates its temples; it avows respect for the gods; it promises celestial happiness; it introduces the voice of the multitude in its favour; and thus, it deceives the unwary to their own destruction.

Pretending to be the guardian of the peace, the prosperity and the glory of nations, it employs the sword of civil authority, to cut off, as disturbers of the peace, the witnesses of a purer faith and a more holy practice. Pilate was less an enemy to our Saviour than were Annas and Caiaphas; and where in-

fidelity has sacrificed upon her altars one true believer, the superstition of despotic princes have offered up to their rapacious demons the blood of a thousand martyrs.

Be not deceived, Christians, I repeat it, be not deceived by the cry of French atheism; but mark with more attention than ever antichrist, in whatever nation he may be found. Treat with equal jealousy and indignation, French, and German, and Spanish, and Russian, and British antichristianism. This is the grand enemy of the church. It is the enemy now to be destroyed. Attend, therefore, in the fear of God, to the voice which is heard from heaven, giving commission to the angels of death, *Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the* EARTH. AMEN.

BIBLARIDION,

OR THE

APOCALYPTICAL LITTLE BOOK.

LECTURE X.

Rev. x. 9....*And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.*

THERE is a very general reluctance, obvious upon the part of mankind, to have their conduct tried by the precepts of divine revelation. This feature of human character appears, most conspicuous, in those great social concerns which involve the strongest feelings, and the most extensive temporal interests of multitudes of men—I mean those very complicated concerns which usually pass under the general name of *politics.* There exists, even among *professed,* and perhaps some *real* Christians, a powerful disinclination to have their political maxims and transactions subjected to the rules of Christianity.

This fact, while it is an evidence that religion is opposed to the general plans of worldly-minded men, and also that it has too little influence over its

professed friends, is not surprising. Christianity, hitherto, except in a few instances, has suffered by its connexion with civil polity: and, from the very nature of society, it must suffer, in such connexion, until both learning and power are transferred into the hands of godly men, and so made subservient to piety. Independently of the impressive lessons of long and painful experience upon this subject, it is quite reasonable to expect, that if unsanctified men incorporate revealed religion with civil government, such a form will be certainly given to religion, as may suit unsanctified power. The daughter of Zion is much better without such an alliance: for it is the very essence of antichristianism. *The bride, the Lamb's wife,* cannot be supposed to escape pollution, if taken into the embraces of unholy men, and rendered dependent upon a government which they administer. It is safer for the friends of religion to continue like the *witnesses prophesying in sackcloth,* faithfully struggling in poverty against the frowns of power, than to become the stipendiaries of irreligious statesmen.

This truth is inculcated by every line of

THE LITTLE OPEN BOOK.

It is the design of this lecture, *To explain the manner in which this book is brought into view*—and *To unfold its contents.*

The discussion, although it does not assume the *form* of a Commentary, must be in fact an exposition of chap. x. throughout, and of chap. xi. from the 1st to the 13th verse. The succeeding verses of

that chapter, have already been explained in Lecture VIII. of this series of discourses.

I. *I am to explain to you the manner in which this book is brought into view.*

In the preceding lecture, I have endeavoured to show the meaning of the term *antichrist*, and have given the reasons which require its application to the great *apostacy of the Latin Roman empire.*

When expounding the trumpets, we found it necessary to pass over the *tenth*, and the principal part of the *eleventh* chapter, in order to proceed directly from the *sixth* to the *seventh* trumpet; and we then showed the reason for interposing the present subject of discussion between these two trumpets, viz. To exhibit the *object* of the last-mentioned judgment, which had in fact risen up during the progress of the preceding trumpets.*

As the same system of immorality and irreligion, which is the subject of punishment under the *seventh trumpet*, or third wo, is the subject of the judgments poured out from the vials also, it is necessary to describe it more particularly in this place, than could be consistently done at the time just mentioned. We have already observed, that the narrative of the trumpets proceeds from the close of chap. ix. to chap. xi. 14. and that the whole of chap. x. and xi. 1—13. should be considered as parenthetical.

* The reader may consult in this connexion, Lecture VII. from page 188. to page 192. Argument 2d, for ascertaining the *time* of the third wo.

This part is the *little book* introduced, as a codicil, or as a note to the *larger*, the *sealed book:* for that book, including the seven seals, must also have included the seven trumpets. And as the latter part of chap. xi. describes the seventh trumpet, that part must of course belong to the *larger*, and not to the *little* book.

This *codicil*, or LITTLE BOOK, is introduced to view in a distinct VISION. It is the *fourth* of the prophetic *visions* recorded in the Apocalypse. In reading the account here given of it, our attention is directed to *him, who held in his hand this book,—to the seven thunders which accompanied the revelation of this personage—and to the fact of John the Divine's taking the book out of his hand.*

1. This vision exhibits our Saviour as holding in his hand an open book.

Chap. x. 1, 2. *And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth, and cried with a loud voice as when a lion roareth.*

The *angel* now revealed, is not an inferior messenger, but the Omnipotent Angel of the covenant, descending from heaven in his administration of the kingdom of Providence. Every part of the hieroglyphic points out God-man our glorious Redeemer. As he dwelt in the cloudy pillar, which served as the guide of Israel from Egypt to the land of promise, so he appears *clothed with a cloud*, to his church, when he first announces the character of antichrist.

To the Father of the faithful, Gen. xv. he appeared passing between the parts of the sacrifice, which confirmed the covenant, in a smoking furnace, and burning lamp, signifying the troubles and the triumphs of the children of promise. Now, when the church is entering into the gloomy valley, in the period emphatically called the dark ages, Messiah puts on, as a mantle, a cloud of thick darkness.

The church shall, nevertheless, enjoy new covenant protection. The seal of God is visible, in the *rainbow*, on the head of Jesus Christ. Christians behold with joy this token; and, however dark the cloud, they are certain that the floods shall not overwhelm them.

They who love him too, during the general moral darkness of the world, are favoured with the light of his countenance. *His face was as it were the sun.* They who fear his name, shall see the Sun of Righteousness arising with healing in his wings: for light shall arise to the upright in darkness.

Pure in themselves, and sanctifying in their effects to his followers, shall be the dispensations of this almighty Messenger. His steps are in holiness and majesty: for *his feet are as pillars of fire.*

In evidence both of his mediatory power, and of the extent of his authority, he places *his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth.* The Father indeed, hath put all things under his feet. The waters of the deep obeyed his voice when he was upon earth; yea, the sea received originally from him, the decree, hitherto shalt thou come, and no further. The earth also belongs to him; for he

made it, and as the Redeemer of men he upholds the pillars of it. All that are upon it, whether man or beast, are subject to his government. Thou hast given him power over all flesh.

The right foot is that which naturally first advances. It is put in this case, upon the *symbolical sea,*—the turbulent and distracted multitudes of men who were left in confusion after the dismemberment of the western empire. Over them he reigns: and he controls their wrath. Afterwards, the antichristian system appears more firm—the *symbolical earth.* It also is under the feet of Messiah. For, although the *man of sin,* the *impious king* of Daniel's prophecy, sitteth in the temple of God, in order to oppose the Most High and set at nought both his worship and his law, he is himself in fact under the feet of our Saviour: yea, the whole mystery of iniquity is absolutely under his control.

In possession of this power and authority he causeth his voice to be heard. *He cried, as when a lion roareth.* He spake with authority, when he appeared on earth in the form of a servant. Now, exalted to the right hand of God, and made King of kings, and Lord of lords, he gives the word, and it is done. Who can resist Omnipotence! Although he is the *Lamb slain* as a victim for our sins, he is also the *Lion* of the tribe of Judah, who governs both his own people, and his and their enemies.

He had in his hand a little book open. In the vision of the sealed book, it was made sufficiently manifest that Messiah alone can administer and reveal the purposes of the divine mind respecting the concerns of his

empire. He took *that* book out of his Father's hand: and it was not now necessary to repeat the evidence of his mediatory appointment to universal authority. He of course appears in the undisputed possession of supreme power. The book *in his hand* is also *open*. He who was entitled to break up the seven seals of the great book, of the Lord's whole purpose respecting the future concerns of the church and of the moral world, may be justly represented as having the subordinate parts of the grand scheme already laid open to him, that he may lay them open to his servants. There is a more particular reason, however, for representing the present book as *open* in his hand.

Of the sealed book, the events were still future at the date of the vision. Of this book, the subject was actually matter of history at the time to which the vision now under consideration applies. It is introduced to view, after the age of the *second wo*, or *sixth* trumpet: and it respects what had, long before, been too well known, and severely felt throughout Christendom,—the great antichristian system. After the year 1672,* when the second wo had overthrown completely the remains of the Greek empire, and the Ottoman power was seated in the city of Constantine the Great, a book, which described the antichristian system of the western empire, ought not to be represented as a sealed book. The persecuting character of the man of sin, and the sufferings of the witnesses, had already been made manifest in the

* See this explained in page 170.

light of history, and therefore was this *book open* in the Redeemer's hand.

It was a *little book.* Βιβλαριδιον, is a diminutive of βιβλος. It is very surprising that, in direct contradiction to the assertion, which comparing the present book with the sealed book formerly described, calls this a very small volume, so many judicious men as the great mass of protestant Commentators upon the Apocalypse have been, should persist in making it larger than the other. There is not a shadow of reason for Dr. Johnston's assertion, that it is the remainder of the sealed book itself, embracing the whole succeeding twelve chapters of the Revelation. There is as little foundation for the assertion of Mr. Faber, that it contains the whole of the chapters from the ixth to the xvth. Bishop Newton and Dr. Scott are undoubtedly correct, in representing the little book as terminating with verse 13 of chap. xi.

Both these gentlemen have, however, neglected to state the principal object of the little book, and of course the most forcible argument for limiting it as they have done. It was introduced between the narrative of the sixth and that of the seventh trumpet, because otherwise the seventh trumpet must have appeared without an object.

In no other part of the Apocalypse had there been given a view of the antichristian empire, before the sounding of the seventh trumpet; and consequently it was necessary in this place to return, and select from preceding history an account of that upon which the wo, denounced by the angel of the seventh trumpet, was about to fall. The parenthesis, therefore,

which gives this account between these two trumpets, is *the little book;* and, on account of the vast importance of its contents, it is introduced to our view with very great solemnity.

The Lord Jesus Christ himself holds it open in his hand, and

2. The exhibition was accompanied with the voice of thunder.

Verses 3—7. *And when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea, and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.*

Thunder, is the noise produced by contending elements, and usually denotes, in the prophetic language, those alarming contentions among the principal powers of the nations, which issue in the great calamities of war. These seven thunders communicated to the apostle John an exposition of their own nature and design; and he was about communicating to us, in this place, the information which he had himself received. He was prevented by divine

authority. *I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.* This is not the place for proclaiming these predictions. Like the visions of Daniel,* these voices must be sealed up for an appointed time. What that time is, we must learn from the Messenger of the covenant, our Lord himself: and he proclaims it under the awful solemnity of an oath. *The angel lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever,* THAT THE TIME SHALL NOT BE YET: *but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.*

The phrase ὅτι χρονος ουκ ετι εσται, I render, notwithstanding the assertion of archdeacon Woodhouse, and the authority of our translation, *that the time is not yet,* instead of *Time shall be no longer;* because this version is justifiable, and it is much more intelligible than the other.†

John the Divine, by a prejudice which has greatly abounded, and which indeed is natural to ingenuous and pious minds, *anticipated* the date of the termination of the *fourth beast's* opposition to Christianity. The Redeemer corrects the mistake, and assures him, that the voice of thunder which he heard, and which he was about to write, should not be accomplished until the time of the seventh trumpet.

This trumpet puts an end to the antichristian system, about to be revealed in the xith chapter.

* Dan. viii. 26. and xii. 4, 9.

† It is preferred by Newton. Mede, Johnston, &c.

Then *shall the mystery of God be finished.* That sovereign and mysterious Providence, which permits the *mystery of iniquity* so long to prevail, will at the very time, revealed of old *to his servants the prophets,* come to an end.

The same truth was declared to Daniel under similar circumstances, with the solemnity of an oath, taken in the same holy and impressive manner.*

* The manner in which an appeal is made to the Supreme Being, ought never in a Christian country to be considered as indifferent. Custom, alas, and not conscience, will however, among irreligious men, usually direct the manner of their religious worship.

The prevailing manner of administering oaths, in this country, borrowed from English customs, is not only unmeaning and irreverent; but also superstitious, and greatly tends to destroy the solemnity of an oath. To see some careless servant or clerk holding out a book, no matter what, which the juror is to kiss, would be ridiculous enough, were it not a prostitution of a holy ordinance. In that case it becomes impious.

Paley, in his Principles of Moral Philosophy, admits the pernicious tendency of the English practice on this subject. "The forms of oaths—are, in no country in the world, I believe, worse contrived, either to convey the meaning, or impress the obligation of an oath, than in our own—the substance of the oath is repeated to the juror by the officer, adding in the conclusion, '*So help you God.*' The juror, whilst he hears the words of the oath, holds his right hand upon a Bible or other book—then kisses the book: the kiss, however, seems rather an act of reverence to the contents of the book, as in the *popish ritual*, the priest kisses the gospel before he reads it, than any part of the oath," page 137. Boston, Oct. 1801.

Another Archdeacon of the church of England takes notice of the prevailing deviation from the scriptural manner of swearing, and remarks with Mr. Paley, the continuance of the proper method still in Scotland. "The angel takes a solemn oath, in a form of scriptural antiquity. This mode of swearing has descended even

Dan. xii. 7—9. *And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and an half—then said I, O my*

to our own times and nation, being still used in Scotland." *Woodhouse in loco.*

The practice of *kissing* the book, which Paley derives from the church of Rome, is of more remote antiquity. The papal superstition borrowed it, like the other parts of their *demon-worship*, from the heathen. Minutius Felix says, that as Cæcilius passed before the statue of *Serapis*, he kissed his hand toward the statue. And the editor of Calmet's Dictionary gives several instances of this kind of idolatry. Job, xxxi. 26, 27. describes this *kissing* as an act of idolatry *to be punished by the judges*, instead of being imitated by them in their systems of jurisprudence. It is described, 1 Kings xix. 18. as a part of the homage given to the idol Baal. The prophet Hosea describes the prevalent idolatry in these remarkable words, which particularly explain the nature of this ceremony. Hosea xiii. 2. *And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images:—they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice* KISS THE CALVES.

It is true, that the practice of this country does not command the men that swear or sacrifice to *kiss the calves;* but it requires, what is to the full as contemptible and superstitious, that they shall kiss the *skin*, whether of sheep or of calf.

I have no doubt, however, if we once had a few sensible and liberal-minded Christians, men raised above the petty prejudices which govern the practice of others, exalted to influence in our land, they could, considering the generous character of our public institutions, with facility correct the evil of multiplying unnecessary oaths, and of administering them in this antichristian manner. Mr. Woodhouse, in proof of the scriptural mode of swearing, produced by our Saviour,—by holding up to the Most High God the right hand, quotes Gen. xiv. 22. Deut xxxii. 40. Ezek. xx. 5. and Isa. lxii. 8.

Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

These thunders, of course, have respect to the events which bring to a close the antichristian period, after the lapse of 1260 years: they accordingly synchronize with the thunders of the seventh trumpet, afterwards heard by the apostle; or rather, they are identified with the thunders of both the seventh trumpet and the seventh vial, which happen at the time of the end, for the destruction of the man of sin, preparatory to the millennium.* To this joyful period, the oath of our exalted Saviour hath undoubted reference, as the era in which the mystery of God shall be finished, and until which the man of sin shall be permitted to stand. This is evident from the words, verse 7. *he hath declared as* GOOD NEWS *to his servants the prophets:* for you are to be informed that the verb used in the text conveys this idea—ευηγγελισε; and is accordingly to be applied to that period for which the saints have been so long waiting in hope, and the approach of which they consider as *glad tidings.*

3. Let us take a view of the apostle John, as he receives the little book from his Redeemer's hand.

Verses 8—11. *And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went*

* Compare xi. 19. with xvi. 18.

unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up: and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

This transaction is similar to what took place when the Lord called Ezekiel, by the Assyrian river, Chebar, to go and prophesy to the captive Israelites, then suffering under the rod of the tyrant of Chaldea—the *first* of the *four beasts* of scripture prediction.*

Unto that prophet was presented, in a miraculous manner, *a hand holding a roll of a book spread out,* and containing a message of *mourning and wo.* He too, was *caused to eat that roll;* and he said, like John the apostle, *Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.* To *eat,* is to receive, after due preparation, food into the stomach, and when applied to intellectual subjects, signifies to receive and understand. Jer. xv. 16. *Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.*

The apostle receives in this instance, for himself, and for his successors in the gospel ministry, a commission suited to the exigencies of the church, the knowledge and reception of which was pleasant, al-

* Ezek. ii. 8—10. and iii. 1—3.

though the circumstances of the case, and the condition of both the world and the church marked out in the commission, were painful to a benevolent heart. The acquisition of knowledge upon interesting subjects, is itself desirable and highly gratifying; but to foresee the sorrows and the sufferings of the people of God, is painful to Christian sensibility.

The little book is pleasant in the mouth; but it *embitters the stomach.* Often, it is our mercy to be ignorant of futurity.

The extent of the commission, given by the Redeemer along with the little open book, and under which we now in the interpretation of that book, are called to act, merits regard—"Thou *must* prophesy before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." It is required, as an indispensable duty, to deliver with plainness and fidelity, this message, however it may affect the great commonwealths of the nations, and their respective constituted authorities. But we proceed,

II. *To unfold the contents of the book.* The whole of this, βιβλαριδιον το ηνεωγμενον, *little open book*, is contained in chap. xi. 17. It is not a part of the sixth trumpet, nor yet of the seventh, although, for the reasons already pointed out, it is introduced between them. Being perfectly distinct from both, we are not therefore, to embarras the interpretation with any attempt to reduce it under these trumpets. True, indeed, it describes events cotemporaneous with those which are predicted by the *last three* angels of the trumpets; and it accordingly synchro-

nizes with *the three great woes:* but while the object of these is to record the fall of the Roman empire in the *east* and in the *west,* the object of the little book is to give a miniature history of the state of religion in the western empire only, during the remarkable period of 1260 years, in which the great apostacy prevailed in opposition to true godliness.

This part of the Apocalypse, therefore, describes *A heathenish church, in league with a tyrannical and idolatrous empire, opposed to a small company of true Christians, denominated the witnesses: and it exhibits the contest between these parties, and the ultimate result.*

Such are the contents of this open book; and we proceed to exhibit them in order.

1. The heathenish church, and beast of the pit. Chap. xi. 1, 2. *And there was given to me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.*

The command addressed in these words, by the Head of the church, the Angel of the covenant, to the apostle John, is intended for all the ministers of the gospel. It was not expected that the beloved disciple, who received in Patmos this revelation, should have his days prolonged to the period designated in the prophecy. His successors, in the public service of the church of God, are of course

the persons to whom it belongs to see this part of the will of God carried into due effect.

For this purpose, the instrument of definite admeasurement is given to them—a reed like unto a rod. The Hebrew קנה whence are derived the Greek Κανων, and the English word *cane*, was both straight and light, and a fit, as well as the common instrument of measuring: and like our rod, or pole, it was of definite length—six ells, of six handbreadths each.

This symbol is borrowed from Ezek. xl. 5. and the reed καλαμος given in this text is to be applied to the same purpose of measuring the temple of God, the altar, and the worshippers.

The *temple* is the church of God, in her regular New Testament organization. The *altar*, as it was the place upon which offerings were presented, is the symbol of divine worship. The *worshippers* are themselves also to be measured by the sacred rule.

The measuring reed, is the word of God given in the scriptures; and the ministry are commanded by the Head of the church, to apply that word faithfully to Christian societies; to their forms of religious worship; and to the character of their members, enjoying Christian privileges. *To the law, and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.* This duty of high importance at all times, is at the present period of distraction, contention, and sufferings, become more interesting than ever: because the great body of those who bear the Christian name, who occupy the court around the temple, and the whole of the great city of Jerusalem, are cut off from any part among

the true worshippers, who worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

"*Measuring the servants of God*, is equivalent to *sealing them.* The *unmeasured tenants* of the outer court, and the *unsealed men* throughout the Roman empire, are alike *the votaries of the apostacy:* while *they that were measured, and they that were sealed,* are *the saints who refused to be partakers of its abominations.*"*

These votaries of the apostacy, we, in this connexion, denominate, the heathenish church.

They have reduced the Christian system, as by themselves professed, into a resemblance to the heathen superstition; and the very name *heathen,* is given to them in this text. Verse 8. *But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles*—ἔθνεσι, the *heathen.* These words of the great angel, Jesus Christ, furnish us, indeed, with three arguments to prove, that the body of the population of Christendom is, during the specified period, to be considered as an *outcast apostate church.*

1. The ministers of Christ are commanded by himself, to *cast out* from the true church, those who worship in the outer court—Εκβαλε is not merely *leave out,* but, *cast out.* It is not a simple reprobation, but a complete exclusion.

2. They are *not to be measured* by the servants of God. They are neither directed by the word of

* Faber, Vol. II. p. 49.

truth, nor sanctified by it; and are consequently like the unsealed sinful world.

3. Both the *unmeasured court*, and the great city itself, the *holy city Jerusalem*, are given to the heathen, to be occupied and oppressed by them for a specified time. What is usually called the Christian church, is thus represented as given to the heathen for forty and two prophetic months. We have of course a prediction, *that the churches of the nations—the Roman Catholic church, should be considered as outcast, apostate, and heathenish, for the space of* 1260 *years.**

* The church of Rome will be described hereafter in these lectures. In the meantime, I transcribe the following passage from a well-known historian. "The images of those who, during their lives, had acquired the reputation of uncommon sanctity, were now honoured with a particular worship in several places; and many imagined that this worship drew down into the images the propitious presence of the saints or celestial beings they represented; deluded, perhaps, into this idle fancy, by the crafty fictions of the heathen priests, who had published the same thing concerning the statues of JUPITER and MERCURY. As there were none in these times to hinder the Christians from retaining the opinions of their *pagan ancestors concerning departed souls, heroes, demons, temples*, and such like matters, and even transferring them into their religious services; and as, instead of entirely abolishing the rites and institutions of ancient times, these institutions were still observed with only some slight alterations; all this swelled of necessity the torrent of superstition, and deformed the beauty of the Christian religion and worship with those corrupt remains of paganism, which still subsist in a certain church.

It will not be improper to observe here, that the famous pagan doctrine, concerning the *purification of departed souls*, by means of

This heathen church is described as in league with the *fourth beast*, the civil power of the Roman empire.

The first *three beasts* of Daniel's vision were passed away long before the time of the little book; and the *fourth* alone remained in power. This beast is described as espousing the cause of the heathen church, and making a successful war upon those who bear witness to the truth, in opposition to the apostacy supported by the coalition between church and state. Verse 7. *The beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.*

This symbol, *beast*, has been already explained to designate *tyrannical and irreligious power.** And, in the present case, it must apply to the powers which exist throughout the Roman empire, after its division into several kingdoms. The origin of antichristian power was formerly described, 2 Thess. ii. 9. *Whose coming will be after the working of Satan.* In this place it is said to be from the ABYSS. Θηριον εκ της αβυσσου, the bottomless pit—a fit coadjutor for a heathenish church. I shall be under the necessity of explaining more particularly, in the course of the next lecture, the character of the *beast of the pit*, who, with his *ten*

a certain kind of *fire*, was more amply explained and confirmed now than it had formerly been. Every body knows, that this doctrine proved an inexhaustible source of riches to the clergy through the succeeding ages, and that it still enriches the Romish church with its nutritious streams. *Mosheim's Church History*, Vol. II. page 37—39. Phil. 1797.

* See Lecture II. page 48.

horns, persecuted the saints; and in alliance with an apostate church, trampled upon the interests of the holy city, and put to death the witnesses of our Lord. It is sufficient now to remark, that one of the contending parties held out to view, in this chapter, is represented to be *the antichristian apostacy, embracing both the ecclesiastical and civil powers of the western Roman empire*—"*the heathenish church, and beast of* the pit."

In my representation of this formidable and complicated system of opposition to Christianity, I am supported by the best expositors. Bishop Newton has these words, "Though the *inner court*, which includes the smaller number, was *measured*, yet the *outer court*, which implies the far greater part, was *left out and rejected*, as being in the possession of Christians only in name, but *Gentiles* in worship and practice, who profaned it with *heathenish superstition and idolatry: and they shall tread under foot the holy city*, they shall trample upon, and tyrannize over the church of Christ, for the space of *forty and two months. The beast that ascendeth out of the abyss*, the tyrannical power of Rome, of which we shall hear more hereafter, shall make war against them, (the witnesses)—They shall be subdued and oppressed; be degraded from all power and authority; be deprived of all offices and functions, and be politically dead."

Mr. Faber says, "that the *outer court* contained only *those nominal Christians*, who in practice were *Gentiles*, and who were unworthy the notice of a Being of infinite purity. The outer court was not *formally*

given unto them by the secular power, till the *saints were given into the hand of the little papal horn* in the year 606, and till the *apostacy became dominant.* The foe that slays the witnesses, is styled the *beast of the bottomless pit:* and this beast will be found upon examination, to be *the first beast* of the Apocalypse, or the beast with seven heads and ten horns. He is the same as Daniel's *fourth beast,* or *the Roman empire.*"

It is time, however, to turn your attention to the other party in the contest.

II. *The Witnesses.*

These are a small company of true Christians, defending the interests of religion against all opposition, and frequently sealing with their blood the testimony which they hold.

You will no doubt be desirous to understand their *character,* and become acquainted with their *history.* It is the principal object of the little book to gratify this desire. In examining its contents, and in meditating upon the representations which it makes, you will know by experience, that it is well calculated to excite the opposite affections of gladness and grief. It is *sweet in the mouth, and makes the heart bitter.* I lay the whole passage before you.

Verses 3—12. *And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man*

will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters, to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will, and when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall be in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another: because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood up on their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud: and their enemies beheld them.

Such is the information concerning the witnesses, with which we are furnished in this prophecy. We shall endeavour to ascertain,

I. *Their character,* in order to assist in discovering their persons in the light of ecclesiastical history.

Witness is a term borrowed from the courts of law; and is applied to the person who declares facts upon oath for the purpose of deciding controversies.

*An oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.** The word Μαρτυς or μαρτυρ, witness or martyr, is derived from Μαρη, *manus*, the *hand*;† because witnesses anciently used to lift up their hands in giving evidence upon oath.‡ God's cause, the Christian religion, is in trial before the world, the tribunal of public opinion among the nations. It is opposed always by corrupt society; and those who give their testimony in its favour are witnesses for God. At the time, referred to in this part of the Apocalypse, antichrist opposes Jesus Christ; and the Saviour employs certain persons to give testimony against the whole claims of the man of sin—*I will give power unto* MY *witnesses.* In former ages, they who supported the cause of Jehovah against the pretensions of idols, were called witnesses.§ The apostles and pastors of the primitive church were Christ's witnesses against Jewish unbelief and misrepresentation.‖ And those who suffered death for the testimony of Jesus, rather than deny the truth, are in every age emphatically called witnesses or *martyrs.*¶

The witnesses in the case before us, have, however, a distinguishing character. They give testimony to the truth in opposition to the antichristian system: and as we have shown, that this system is described in the little book before us, as an *apostate church in league with the beast of the pit,* these witnesses are of course opposed to the *antichristian corruptions of civil and ecclesiastical polity* throughout the whole extent of the Latin Roman empire.

* Heb. vi. 16. † See Hedericus, and Damm. Coll. 1495.
‡ See Parkhurst, and page 305 of these Lectures.
§ Isa. xliii. 10. ‖ Acts x. 39. ¶ Acts xxii. 20. Rev. xvii. 6.

This is their distinctive character. For this express purpose they are introduced; and every assertion concerning them confirms this to be the case.

1. They are *distinguished, as a part from the whole,* from the great body of those who are to be considered as true Christians, and even from the visible church of God in general at this period. They are Christians; and they belong to the true visible church: but they are a distinct class of Christians in the communion of the visible church. "These witnesses differ as much from their contemporaries, the 144,000 sealed ones, as Elijah differed from the 7000 in Israel in his time, 'who did not bow the knee to Baal.' Those testify *openly* against the antichristianism of the papacy; while these abstain from the corruptions, and worship God sincerely *in secret.*"*

They stand in the inner temple, but they are distinguished from the *measured temple, altar, and worshippers,* verse 1, and from the *woman and her seed,* chap. xii. 14—17. These are preserved completely throughout the period of 1260 years, until the millennium; but the witnesses *lie dead three years and a half.* God is never, for a moment, without a people upon earth;† and the visible church is an indestructible society:‡ but these witnesses are actually *killed by the beast.*

2. They are represented as *principally* engaged in the contest with the beast, verses 5, 6. They bear the principal *suffering* in the contest, verse 7. They

* Frazer's Key, page 148. Phil. 1802.
† Psa. cii. 28. ‡ Matth. xvi. 18.

occupy even in antichristian estimation, the place of most importance: for they are most feared; their death affords the greatest satisfaction; they suffer the chief reproach, a refusal of the rights of sepulture to their slain bodies: and inasmuch as they inflicted, in their life, the greatest torments upon their antichristian enemies, these enemies are, at their resurrection, filled with peculiar alarm, verses 8—11.

3. As *king*, *horns*, &c. represent in prophetic style, not an individual, but a succession of men in power, so *witness* is not to be applied to certain individuals, but to a *succession* of faithful men, opposing the antichristian corruptions both in church and state, throughout the gloomy period of 1260 years. These witnesses are *two* in number; because *one* is not sufficient according to the law* to prove the guilt of the antichrist; and because there were as few employed as would be sufficient to attest the truth, and protest against the perversions of the Christian system.

There is besides in this number, *two*, an allusion to well-known characters who appeared, *two and two*, and who exemplified in their own day, and taught with fidelity, that doctrine which antichrist remarkably opposes, and which these witnesses are authorized to maintain—the doctrine which requires that man should regulate all his social concerns by the principles and precepts of revealed religion. This doctrine has always been opposed by the supporters of the man of sin; and in direct hostility to it, the antichristian system has been established.

* Deut. xvii. 6. 2 Cor. xiii. 1.

The *two* great branches of that system, the heathenish church and beast of the abyss, have of course corrupted the moral order of the *two* great kinds of society in Christendom, civil and ecclesiastical. They who bear testimony against this *two-fold* corruption of religion and morals, are not improperly called *two*, in allusion to several remarkable instances of two distinguished cotemporaries, who had applied true religion both to civil and ecclesiastical polity. Moses and Aaron are well known to those who read the Apocalypse. These *two*, the one *king in Jeshurun*,* and the other *high priest* of the sanctuary,† were eminent witnesses of the religious duties of the church and state. They are referred to in the description of our *two* witnesses, verse 6. as they who in the land of Egypt exhibited *power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues.*‡ Elijah and Elisha were distinguished cotemporaries, who restored the law, purged the sanctuary, and made Ahab to tremble on the throne of Israel. They contended for the reformation of society, both in church and state, and are referred to as possessing the spirit of these witnesses whose character we are now investigating, verses 5, 6. To bring fire from heaven to devour the enemy, and to prevent the refreshing rain from descending on the earth, are a reference to the actions of Elijah, whose mantle descended upon Elisha.§ There are *two* other remarkable witnesses, of whom *these* are the legitimate

* Deut. xxxiii. 5. † Exod. xxviii. 1. and xxix. 21.
‡ Exod. vii. 17. § 1 Kings xvii. 1.
James v. 17. 2 Kings i. 10—12.

successors, referred to in this prophecy. They are Joshua the high priest, and Zerubbabel prince of Judah, who returned from the Chaldean captivity, and actually restored the moral order of the house of Jacob, re-establishing their civil and ecclesiastical polity.* This fact leads me to state as the

4th Consideration, to show that we have not mistaken the character of the witnesses, the allusion in

* "The prophets are particularly described, verse 2. by, 1. their special work to witness and give testimony for Christ, against the *corruptions and usurpations* of these times: so ministers are called witnesses, Acts i. 7, 8. Their work should be to be witnesses for mistaken truth, and against antichrist.

"They are said to be *two*, 1. because two witnesses are the least that confirm a truth, but they are sufficient; so it importeth they shall not be many, yet sufficient to testify against these evils fully. 2. Because of allusion in the words following, where something of *three couple* of famous witnesses is attributed to *these two* mentioned here; in allusion, I say, to God's way of making use of two, in all dangerous periods of the church, viz. Joshua and Zerubbabel, Moses and Aaron, Elias and Elisha; in respect to which three couple, the following description of the witnesses here, is holden forth in the effect of their prophesying, both to friends and enemies; viz. 1. They are as Zerubbabel and Joshua, *two olive-trees*, Zech. iv. 3. from whom droppeth the oil to keep light and life in the two candlesticks.

"2. If any will oppose them, *fire proceedeth from them*, as Elias destroyed the two fifties, 2 Kings i. 10. So their enemies shall be destroyed as surely, and their word and threatenings shall take effect on them.

"3. Their power is described by other effects, that as Elias, by prayer, prevailed to shut heaven, that it rained not, and Moses and Aaron did turn waters into blood, and wrought other wonders in *plaguing* of Egypt, so shall they have." *Durham on the Revelation*, page 496. Glasgow, 1788.

verse 4. *These are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.* Here is an immediate reference to the vision of Zechariah the prophet, at the restoration from the captivity of Judah, chap. iv. A candlestick or lamp-bearer of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, which communicated by seven distinct pipes, to as many lamps, the oil which it contained, appeared to the prophet, after his attention had been excited by an angel. That, however, which excited his curiosity most forcibly, was what respected the two olive-trees. These stood, one upon each side of the lamp-bearer, emptying golden oil out of themselves through two golden pipes, into the bowl which communicated with the seven several lamps of this splendid object. Three several times did the prophet ask of the angel an explanation of this symbol. At last he is informed that these two olive-trees, are *the two anointed ones, or sons of oil, that stand by the* LORD. These olive-trees represented to the prophet, for the encouragement of the emancipated Israelitish captives, in the holy work of reform in which they were engaged, the *two distinguished anointed servants* of the Lord, Joshua the high priest, and Zerubbabel the governor, both celebrated by name, and recommended also as worthy of confidence in chapters 3d and 4th. They represent the two great standing

"It is a sufficient reason why these witnesses are said to be *two*, as *two* were the legal number of witnesses, and as in the times of the ancient prophets on greater occasions, two were usually joined together, as Moses and Aaron in Egypt; Elijah and Elisha in the apostacy of the tribes; Zerubbabel and Joshua, after the Babylonish captivity." LOWMAN.

ordinances of God, for the preservation of moral and religious order in the human family, the ministry and magistracy, which antichrist is endeavouring universally to corrupt. The two witnesses therefore, standing before the Lord of the whole earth, and proclaiming the dignity of Jehovah-Jesus, of whom Joshua and Zerubbabel were eminent types, in the two-fold character of Head of the church, and Prince of the kings of the earth, oppose the pretensions of the antichrist, who having usurped the temple of God, claims also the right of disposing of crowns and kingdoms.

The sons of oil are, accordingly, those who maintain and promote the light of truth respecting the application of Christianity to the social order of both church and state. They are the two candlesticks, *lamp-bearers*, because they proclaim the truth, and hold up its light to the world. They are the two *olive-trees*, because they contend for those ordinances, and have succeeded to the spirit of those men, that by divine appointment support the light of truth, in its sanctifying influences over the sanctuary and the throne.

After these observations, it will appear unnecessary to enter upon a formal examination of the several opinions which have been offered relative to the character of the witnesses.* We pass on,

* Opinions relative to the witnesses.

1. The Old and New Testament.
2. The Old and New Testament churches.
3. The Protestant and Greek churches.
4. Some two distinguished individuals—Luther, and Calvin, &c.
5. All Christians, or the Protestants.
6. The French Republicans.

2. To *the history* of the witnesses.

Having endeavoured to ascertain the *character* of these eminent witnesses, and to prove, what ought to have been upon first sight obvious to all, that they are the opponents of the system against which they testify—both the *heathen church* and the *beastly* state of civil government which exists throughout the western empire, we shall take a view of their history.

The time of *forty-two* months, in which heathenism prevails in Christendom, is the same with that in which the witnesses prophesy: 42 months of thirty days each amount to 1260 days. I now take for granted, what I shall afterwards prove, that these days are put for years, and that they are to be dated from the year 606, when the holy city was put under the feet of the man of sin, by the authority of the supreme head of the empire. It follows, that the period of history now under consideration, is from the year 606 until the year 1866, or 1843, according to the rules of chronology by which the length of the year is determined.*

During this period, which is now drawing near its close, the *sons of oil*, or witnesses, prophesied; and this consideration ought to have prevented the application of the prediction, either to individual men, or to any society which did not exist from the beginning to the end of the specified time.

They are said to *prophesy*, not because they are themselves inspired, but because they act under the direction of the inspired writings, and apply the predictions to their proper objects.

* This question must be hereafter discussed.

Their clothing is sackcloth; because they are in mourning—exposed to oppression—and banished from the palaces of the great, where those dwell who are clothed in rich attire. They are habitually persecuted by the powers of this world.

The witnesses send *fire out of their mouth,* when they denounce from the scriptures, and in the spirit of true religion, just judgments upon their antichristian enemies. They *smite the earth with plagues,* when according to their prayers and declarations, vengeance comes upon the advocates of the apostacy, the inhabitants of the symbolical earth. They *turn the waters into blood;* when the nations are made the instruments of punishing one another for their opposition to the testimony of Jesus Christ in the hands of his servants, as will more fully appear in the history of the *seven last plagues.* All these judgments, indeed, refer to the seven golden vials; and the *witnesses* co-operate, throughout the whole period of their history, with the *living creature* who gave the *vials* into the hand of the angels.*

The *fact* of the faithful contendings of such characters, during this whole period—their *death*—and their *resurrection,* are the most interesting subjects of discussion, relative to this part of the Apocalypse.

Discarding all other interpretations of the WITNESSES of this *little book,* we maintain that they are

Those faithful men, of whatever age, nation, or church, who, during the apostacy of the Roman empire, maintain the doctrines of Christianity, and insist upon their application to the whole moral order of society, both in church and state, bearing their testimony against

* See Lecture VIII. page 235.

all persons and communities who refuse submission to Messiah our King.

I consider all other representations of the witnesses, as confused, unsatisfactory, and inconsistent, in themselves; and, as it respects the several systems upon which they proceed, private, partial, and illiberal. We ought not to embrace, among the few select servants of our Lord who prophesy in sackcloth, those splendid heretical establishments of the nations, which evidently abuse Christianity; but we ought not to discard from their fellowship, those men of piety, discernment, and fidelity, who, according to their several circumstances in society, wheresoever they live, or may have lived, are found engaged in contending against the great antichristian system of the Latin empire, and vindicating the doctrines and mediatorial prerogatives of Jesus Christ, the Head of the church, and Governor of the nations of the earth.

It is *a fact*, that a succession of such characters has always existed since the rise of the man of sin.

The Waldenses, from the earliest ages of antichristian usurpation, contended against the enemy, and resisted in open warfare the power of the beast. The Bohemian Brethren, the reformed cantons of Switzerland, and some of the states of Germany, resisted tyrannical power, and papal domination, and gave a practical example of their opposition to the heathen church, and the beast of the pit. The reformers in the Netherlands taught the principles of the Christian faith to statesmen and warriors, as well as to church members, and succeeded once in wresting from the man of sin, for a time, the oppressed provinces of Holland.

The French witnesses were numerous, and learned, and pious, and powerful; but although they deserved success, they were overcome. The *age of the reformation* confessedly exhibited, very extensively throughout the empire, able supporters of the Christian system, who laboured for the establishment of true religion in church and state. The British reformers, at the time in which the venerable Assembly of Divines sat at Westminster, exhibited the most accurate and comprehensive system of truth and order which has yet appeared in the national churches of Europe; and they abundantly exemplified their testimony against the beast of the pit, in their exertions to purify the throne as well as the sanctuary. For this purpose, the English and the Scottish Presbyterians, entered into the solemn league and covenant, which made them one body of witnesses, bound together by the oath of God, to contend even unto extirpation against the claims of antichrist in both church and state.

The United States of America feel the heat, and rejoice in the light of the sacred fire, which was transported by their fathers across the Atlantic ocean, when the British *horn of the beast of the pit* had succeeded in overthrowing the holy fabric of the reformation. Able and eminent men still exist among the several nations and churches, contending as witnesses for those principles which are destined ultimately to bless the moral world.* Such witnesses

* The history of the true witnesses of Christ is exceedingly interesting, and here too rapidly sketched. In the works of *Usher* and of *Allix*, the learned reader will find much desirable information on the subject. Bishop Newton's dissertation on the text, is re-

will continue to prophesy ruin to the advocates of the antichristian system, and deliverance to the holy city from the feet of oppression, until they are made to seal their testimony with their blood.

We must now, painful as it is, consider

THE DEATH OF THE WITNESSES.

This alarming event is described in the following words, verses 7—10. "And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where

plete with important matter. But a comprehensive and satisfactory account of the *two* witnesses and of their testimony, from the rise of antichrist until the present day, would be a very valuable document to the Christian scholar. It would furnish an account of the *remnant of the faithful* as distinguished from nominal Christianity, in the first place; and in the second place, an account of those pious and public-spirited men who testified against *thrones of iniquity*. At the present day, these two witnesses, according to my definition of them, are greatly scattered: but still, there are many in Europe, and not a few in the United States of America, who, in opposition to the prevalent errors of their age, have raised a voice too loud not to be heard, too distinct not to be understood, and too persuasive not to be respected, both in defence of evangelical doctrine, and in support of the maxim, that religion should influence the political as well as the ecclesiastical conduct of man. Their names and their testimony to this truth, deserve to be distinctly made known in a history of the witnesses. For such a work, the author of these lectures has already made some preparation. Should his life be spared, he may hereafter, unless anticipated by a more able hand, lay it before the public.

also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another, because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth."

As there have been various opinions respecting the witnesses themselves, there have been different interpretations given of this interesting part of their history. The kind of death which they suffer must depend upon the kind of life and action which belongs to them: for death is the extinction of life, and puts an end to exertion. The *power* also which kills; the *length of time* in which they lie dead and unburied; *the place* and *the time*, in which they are put to death, must all be explained in consistency with our ideas of the witnesses themselves. An error, of course, in designating their character, will pervade the whole exposition of their history. This will account for the great disagreement among the expounders of prophecy upon this subject. I shall lay before you at one view,

The principal opinions concerning the death of the witnesses.

1. The general suppression of the bible, by the Papists and Mahometans.
2. The general persecutions of Christians by papal power from its origin.
3. The opposition made to the protestant and Greek churches by the papacy.

4. The burning, for heresy, of John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, &c. &c.
5. The defeat of the protestants in the battle of Mulburg, in April, 1547.
6. Persecutions in England, under Queen Mary, 1553.
7. The French St. Bartholomew's massacre, in 1572.
8. The persecution, by Lewis XIV. at the revocation of the edict of Nantes, 1685.
9. Persecutions in Piedmont, by the duke of Savoy, in 1686.
10. The opposition to Christianity, by the French revolutionists, 1792.

Lastly, some terrible persecution which is, as yet, to come.

It would lead me too far from the immediate object of this discourse, should I attempt to examine minutely each of these opinions. I propose only to establish the truth of that which represents the death of the witnesses as still future, and thus supersede the necessity of discussing any other hypothesis.

In adopting this view of the subject, I confess I do not follow where inclination would lead. Could I find it consistent with the word of God, I should prefer to exhibit our calamities as past, than hold out to your fears the gloomy side of the picture. Even in this case, however, the friends of God ought not to be discouraged. Although the slaughter of the witnesses is yet to come, the cause of religion will generally prosper henceforward throughout the earth. The immense exertions which are at present made

to send the word of life among the nations, and the state of Christianity already in places to which the power of the beast does not extend, secure under the divine blessing and protection, the progress of godliness over the earth, although iniquity shall have a short-lived triumph on the street of the mystical Sodom. The nations, within the symbolical earth, which are to be immediately affected by the approaching catastrophe, will be spared until they have done their work of providing elsewhere a place of refuge for the faithful. And our own country, remote from that earth and from the power of the beast of the pit, will remain as an asylum to the dispersed saints, at the time when the witnesses shall be slain in their native land. The religion of Christ shall still continue to move with accelerated velocity, and the number of its votaries shall continue to increase, as shall afterwards be made to appear from other prophecies, at the very time when Satan descends in extraordinary wrath, because his time is but short, to animate his servant the beast to kill the witnesses of Christ against antichrist. In a very short time after their death shall they arise where they fell, and even there obtain the power over their enemies.

"Many good and great men," said an able divine, venerable for his age, his learning, and his piety, "entertain serious apprehensions of approaching evils, and cannot divest themselves of anxious fears, that the gloom will actually thicken at the close, that the number of believers will be greatly diminished, errors overwhelm the church, and true religion be reduced to an extreme point of depression—But if

such apprehensions are the result of ignorance or unwarrantable timidity, if they are not supported by the word of God, especially if they contradict the word, and oppose the evident procedure of divine Providence, let them be dismissed."* In these sentiments we acquiesce, and we dismiss undue *apprehensions*, although contrary to the views of President Livingston, we maintain the death of the witnesses to be still a future event. We do not admit, however, the charge even of *timidity* to apply in this case. When the hour of trial came, there was as much magnanimity displayed by Jeremiah, who predicted the fall of Jerusalem, as there was found in those who disbelieved that prediction. *I have believed, therefore have I spoken.*

The witnesses of this chapter, we have already described. They are immediately opposed to the complex system of tyranny and superstition, and display a testimony against antichristian principles in church and state. They are, of course, esteemed *bad subjects to the beast and his ten horns;* and are therefore said to *torment them that dwelt on the earth.* The *present truth,* whatever may be most disputed, they more immediately maintain. And wheresoever they are, they testify against the prevalent corruptions. That point upon which antichrist attacks Christianity, they for the time defend. They are the friends of both civil and religious liberty; but it is *Christian liberty,* and not irreligion, which they defend, and which they recommend to society, civil and ecclesiastical. They are not timid or partial, but boldly declare the truth; and because they are

* Dr. Livingston's Missionary Sermon, New-York, 1804.

unyielding, they are hated. They are always persecuted during the 1260 years, in which they prophesy in sackcloth: and with a *progressive* testimony against the errors of the man of sin, they go on to complete it; and it is about the time in which they finish their testimony they are killed.

Their death is caused by the beast of the pit. The heathenish church excites the immoral power of the state to this deed; but it is the *revived empire of the west* which kills the witnesses, either directly by its own power, or by employing one or more of its horns or kingdoms to do this. "Let the reader," said Mr. Faber, "only compare together the following texts, and he will be sufficiently convinced of the truth of my assertion. Rev. xi. 7. The beast *that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, shall make war against them.* Rev. xiii. 1. And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast *rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns.*

Rev. xvii. 7, 8. I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the *seven heads and ten horns.* The beast that *thou sawest* was, and is not, and shall ascend *out of the bottomless pit.* It is a palpable truth, that the beast of the sea, and the beast of the bottomless pit, are the self-same ten-horned and seven-headed beast."

The time in which they lie dead is three days and a half. A day for a year. The time is specific. It is a forced construction, which, to answer a purpose otherwise irreconcileable with this prophecy, would render the three days and a half equal to the 1260 days of their prophecy. In that case the witnesses

never lived. If they lay dead during the whole time of their prophecy, when was it that they tormented the nations? for in their death the nations rejoiced. With such a latitude of interpretation, dates may signify any thing. The plain truth is, those witnesses bore their testimony 1260 years, under circumstances of great affliction. At the close of this period, they were silenced by the last struggles of the beast to preserve his power. He triumphed, and they were silent for three and a half years. They revived at the end of that period; the beast disappeared; and the time of Daniel came when the saints possessed the kingdom. The little book terminates; and the narrative of the sealed book commences, where it was interrupted, with an account of the sounding of the seventh trumpet. Such is certainly the idea that a plain unprejudiced reader of intelligence would annex to this passage. Nothing but the design of making it consistent with some system, adopted from prejudice, would torture the three days and a half to an equality with 1260 days, and so rob us of all our living witnesses, keeping them dead during the whole time. Death and life, in relation to the same thing, cannot be predicated of them at the same time. It was their *life*, as witnesses to bear testimony against antichrist; it is, as witnesses, they are put to *death*, when such testimony is violently and effectually silenced. There *will be* Christians, there *will be* churches, as there always have been. But for three years and a half, there *will not be* found, within the bounds of the Latin Roman empire, any witnesses to bear a public

testimony against the man of sin, at the close of his reign. I shall, however, lay before you in this place, a summary of the argument by which we prove the death of the witnesses to be yet a future event.

1. The death of the witnesses is yet to come, because they are now neither dead, nor arisen from the dead.

They still prophesy in sackcloth. It is not imagined by any expositor that we are now under the three and a half years; and it is manifest we are not, from the fact that no joy is felt by the antichristian nations, no mirth, no sending of gifts, according to verse 10th, for such an event. There is too much activity still among Christians in opposing the grand enemy, to admit the idea that the witnesses are now lying unburied in the streets. And if their character has been properly defined in this lecture, it is equally manifest that their resurrection is not arrived. Immediately upon that event, extraordinary terror falls upon their enemies: and they are themselves, by the voice of God, called up to heaven, no longer to wear sackcloth; for that is not the place of mourning. The throne is, then, occupied by the saints; and the kingdoms of this world, become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. The great predicted earthquake arrives—the antichristian system shakes to its centre; the impenitent supporters of it perish in despair; and the remnant submit to true religion, and give glory to God. Nothing like this has as yet accompanied or flowed from the French revolution—the only event, to which the

earthquake, verse 13th, has at all been applied by modern expositors. The friends of religion, and the most enthusiastic admirers of civil liberty, find now that their early impressions were incorrect, when they hailed as the resurrection of the witnesses the convocation of the French national assembly.

Like other events, the French revolution will be overruled by the King of nations for his own glory; but it was unreasonable ever to have expected from such men, as made the principal figure in that work of judgment and of blood, that they should personate the arisen witnesses of the living Saviour Jesus Christ, or even that civil liberty itself should be established and protected by them.

2. We consider the event as future, because these witnesses have not as yet employed, in prophesying, the *whole time* unto which they have been called; and it is not until then that they are slain.

The *time*, definitely marked out in prophecy for this work, is 1260 years; and these years are not expired. The *evils* against which they testify still exist—corrupt constitutions of church and state—*the heathenish church, and the seven-headed ten-horned beast.* However happy the deliverance procured for the churches by the protestant reformation, there is not among these nations of the western empire a single one to-day without an antichristian constitution.* So far, therefore, from being themselves, in their political character, ranked among the witnesses against the corruptions of church and state, are these

* This principle will be illustrated in Lecture XII.

nations, that they require from the faithful a testimony against the immoralities which they have incorporated with their several establishments. In each of these nations mere politicians have modified even the protestant churches into such a form, as that, while they are *severed* from other churches contrary to the *unity of the Spirit*, they are made a part of the civil government of the nation, and are thus degraded to the earth.

These corrupt establishments place the churches in league with the beast with the ten horns; and instead of being themselves witnesses against corruption, there are, both within and without their communion, men who, in sackcloth prophesy against them, and bear a testimony against the evil. It is when *they shall have finished*, at the end of 1260 years, their testimony, they shall be killed. Whether we render οταν τελεσωσι, in verse 7, *when they shall be finishing*, or, *when they shall have finished*, is a matter of no consequence. The idea in either case, carries us where the whole history of the witnesses leads us, to the termination of the period.

3. From the *nature* of the work of bearing testimony against antichristian misrule, in church and commonwealth, it is evident that it is still incomplete; and hence also it appears, that they who carry on the work are not yet dead.

Christ, our pattern and example, the faithful and true witness, was not put to death until he finished the work given him to do. And by the reference to his crucifixion, verse 8, it is to be expected that

his witnesses shall not be slain until, as he did, they finish, in their last sufferings, the whole work they have to perform. This is the true import of the expression οταν τελεσωσι. In suffering death, our Saviour finished *his* work. When finishing *their* work, the witnesses are slain. By the blood of martyrdom, they seal the *last* article in their testimony; and thus is the testimony *completed.*

Of these articles, it appears from the history of the persecutions which preceded this age, there remains one, an important one, and only one, to be a ground of suffering. In testifying for it, there is high probability, the witnesses must be slain.

The true cause of all persecution, is in all ages the same—DISOBEDIENCE TO THE POWERS THAT BE. If Christians would act, as such powers desire, in all cases, there would be no controversy, no martyrdom. If in every point they obey, but in one, for that one they must suffer. Such is persecution.

Under the Old Testament, the saints suffered for worshipping the true God, and rejecting idols. At the commencement of the Christian era, they suffered from Jews and Gentiles, for receiving Christ as Messiah, and for defending the doctrine of faith in his name. Under antichrist they suffered, at and before the reformation, for defending the doctrines of grace, and the order of the sanctuary against the *heathen church* in league with the *beast.* Antichrist tolerated what the Jews and the pagans condemned. He permitted men to worship God, and acknowledge Messiah; but not to oppose the papal superstition. After the reformation, the protestant powers, as well

as the popish kingdoms, claimed the right of *prescribing* a religion for their subjects. The saints then suffered, not merely for their abstract articles of belief, or for their opinions of the pope; but for not submitting to the religious worship supported by the government of the country. This was the cause of the persecutions in France under *Lewis XIV.* and in Britain under THE HOUSE OF STUART. Every where, throughout the Roman empire, the witnesses have testified that Christ is the only Saviour, and they died to seal that testimony. The Hugonots, the Puritans, and the Covenanters, have suffered death, in bearing testimony to the exclusive headship of Jesus Christ over his own church, and in disclaiming all human lordship over the conscience: but it does not appear that witnesses have been put to death for testifying against the *irreligion* of civil polity, any where as yet, in the antichristian world. This article still remains to be completed. As these sons of sorrow, clad in mourning apparel, were originally *cited* to give evidence for the cause of truth and order in the world, against the pretensions of the *heathen church and beast of the pit*, it is necessary that they be as explicit, in opposing the *beastliness* of the one, as they have been in opposing the *heathenism* of the other.

Christ's HEADSHIP OVER THE NATIONS *is the present testimony.*

It is not probable that the witnesses will escape better in maintaining this doctrine than in other cases. Modern principles of government, it is true, disclaim persecution for articles of faith, or modes of ecclesi-

astical government: but the ten-horned beast will not submit to be told, that he *must* kiss the Son: and that true religion is not merely to be *tolerated*, but is in fact to influence civil polity, and to overthrow all inconsistent establishments. When this *one remaining* article of the testimony against the antichristian system is so generally espoused, as that the number and power of the witnesses is sufficient to excite notice and alarm, then will the beast slay them, and *in dying*, will they have completed their testimony. This period is not yet arrived; but is fast approaching.

4. That the death of the witnesses has not, as yet, come to pass, appears from the fact that it is caused by the *last* great struggle of the beast against the saints. This is obvious, because this war is *peculiarly* mentioned in the prophecy; and because at the resurrection of the witnesses, the power of the enemy comes to an end.

No event corresponding to this has hitherto occurred in Christendom; nor *can* such an event occur until knowledge is so far increased, and influential men are so well instructed, both in the character of the mystery of iniquity, and in that of the true moral order which Christianity recommends for the government of society, as to be in due measure prepared both to testify against the one, and to reduce the other to practice. When the numbers, the learning, and the talents, enlisted on the side of the Bible religion, and Bible politics, are become so formidable as to alarm the beast, then will he make

war upon them; and for three years and a half, that war will be successful. Dreadful will be the effect; but God will speedily interfere. The witnesses shall stand upon their feet before him. He will call them into supreme power, and the reign of antichrist is then no more. The nations are not as yet ripe for this harvest: but knowledge is certainly in rapid progression. Attention to the Bible is increasing every day; and mankind have many inducements, in the present convulsed state of the moral world, to fly for refuge to *that book* which contains the only correct view of the principles which will bless the earth with peace.

Resurrection of the Witnesses.

We have it not in our power to describe very accurately an event which is still future; but we are assured that when those faithful martyrs shall have been silent for the space of *three prophetical days and a half*, that is, *three natural years and a half, the spirit of life from God shall enter into them.* By the grace of God they shall arise, in those who succeed to their principles, and shall assume a respectability and an influence, which puts down all subsequent opposition.

The experiment of antichristian policy will have been, in the estimation of civilized Europe, carried to a sufficient length; and it will be prepared to yield its government to the influence of true religion.

All irreligious polity will be discarded as insufficient to bless the earth with peace and happiness,

and the saints alone exalted to the political heaven. The voice of God will cause this change. Divine grace will influence men to exalt to power over them by their suffrages none but those who will *rule in the fear of God. They ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them.*

Cotemporaneously, εν εκεινη τη ωρα, with the resurrection of the witnesses is the final *earthquake*, and the fall of the *tenth part of the city.* Time will be the most accurate expositor of this prediction. Some kingdom, probably that very one in which the witnesses were slain, and in which most has already been done for the dissemination of sound doctrine; some one of the ten kingdoms which have acted as the horns of the beast, will be distinguished in the general earthquake, by the first actual and complete secession from irreligious policy, and be the *first* to exemplify, upon a permanent footing, since the dismemberment of the Jewish monarchy by the *first great beast,* the true scriptural order of civil government.

This great and salutary change cannot be effected without the entire prostration of former civil and ecclesiastical dignitaries. *In the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand.*

In the original it is ονοματα ανθρωπων, *names of men,* that thus fall. The expression signifies, of course,* the prostration of *titles,* rather than the destruction of *lives.** The inhabitants of other countries, saw

* We have already intimated, page 211, that this period synchronizes with that of the *seventh trumpet*, and with the time of the *vintage*, chap. xiv.

and imitated this example. *The remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.*

Here *the little book* closes. It is a summary history of the remarkable 1260 years, with special reference to the witnesses. It describes the state of the church become heathen in league with immoral power, and the state of the true church measured by the word of God, and worshipping at the New Testament altar; and it emphatically exhibits the few faithful men among the scattered churches who maintained correct principles relative to social religion, in opposition to the corrupt constitutions of church and state in the antichristian empire, until their cause became triumphant, and the reign of the man of sin had terminated.

CONCLUSION.

I must now conclude this lecture, already prolonged to an extraordinary length. I have it in my power, from the sacred text, to assure my hearers, that the Christians and the witnesses of this land shall not suffer in the catastrophe which we have considered. That event takes place within the bounds of the western empire. *We* shall have, it is true, our trials, and our sorrows. Our sympathy will be excited by the sufferings of others; but as we never formed a street of mystical Babylon, the great empire, in which our Lord was crucified, and which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, we cannot by the death of our own citizens, exemplify the death of the witnesses. No: here they have hitherto

found protection. Let this be the asylum of the oppressed. Our nation was peopled, in a great measure, by the persecuted pilgrims, and it has grown by accessions of a similar character. Whatever may be its crimes, and they are very great, and will assuredly be punished by a righteous God; whatever are its crimes, they are small, compared with those of other civilized nations.

America has not been guilty of shedding the blood of the martyrs. She has not persecuted the wandering and benighted sons of Abraham, still beloved for the Fathers' sake, and again to be brought back to the knowledge of the truth. She has not, either by sea or by land, encouraged oppression, or despoiled of his goods him that was at peace with us. This hitherto happy land, has been a place of refuge from the storm which desolates the old world. Long may it retain this character! Let its door of hospitality be still open for the reception of the stranger, who sighs for a participation in the blessings of liberty enjoyed by the sons of Columbia! And let the republican banner cover as a mantle, and continue to protect its adopted citizens, against the unholy claims, and unblessed pretensions of perpetual allegiance to despotic power!

But if *we* are safe from the last war of the beast against the witnesses, where shall the blow fall? On what street, in what kingdom of the ancient empire, shall the witnesses of Jesus Christ lie dead, and unburied, the sport of the sons of darkness? In what land are to be found the victims, the last victims, to be offered upon the altar of the man of sin?

You anticipate my reply. There is one nation to which the eye is irresistibly turned. It is not a secret to the Christian world, in what country dwell the witnesses of our Redeemer, at the present time, in the greatest number, with the greatest zeal, intelligence, activity, and usefulness. There too, they are likely to continue in the greatest notoriety during the few years which remain of the time necessary for them to complete their testimony. It is painful, brethren, to anticipate this event. It embitters the heart. Heavy are these tidings from the little book: but we must receive it out of the angel's hand. Shall our fathers, our friends, our brethren in the faith of God's elect, bound with us in the most sacred ties, for the promotion of the Lord's cause, be opposed, and persecuted, and put to death in the British dominions?

It is only a conjecture. We do not, we dare not predict. The place is not absolutely pointed out in the prophecy. We cannot be certain until the event declares what street of the great city, the old Roman empire, is to be the place of slaughter. The British empire is within the bounds of the symbolical earth. She is, at present, the principal support of the old antichristian systems of Europe. She bears up the empire of the west, against the third and the last wo, now pouring out its plagues by the agency of revolutionary France. Should *that wo* be permitted in the providence of God to break over the cliffs of Albion, and its foaming billows roll along to the high mountains of Caledonia, where the old Roman legions were stopped in the days of other times, the war of the beast against

the witnesses must become matter of history. The best of the saints, and the most magnanimous, intelligent, and faithful of that land, as they would not be silent, could not be safe.

Men of no religion—men inclined to a splendid form without life or reality—the avowed enemies of evangelical doctrine—the high advocates of arbitrary power and prelatical pride—those who excommunicate from the pale of the church of God, all but themselves and the hurch of Rome, would easily embrace the views of the antichristian conqueror.* But thousands among the several religious denominations of the British isles would seal their testimony with their blood.

Such an event—sufferings extreme from the hand of France—sufferings approaching to desolation, have been expected for ages by the pious people in that country. What is to prevent such a catastrophe? Britain, first in crime, because sinning against the clearest light, and the greatest mercies, deserves the scourge. Britain, possessing the most active, useful, and important part of the church of God, will be preserved from wrath until the work assigned to her pious sons shall have been accomplished. Let that work be done, and then though Noah, and Daniel, and Job, were there, they cannot prevent the evil to come.

* *High churchmen*, contending for the *divine right of prelacy*, consign to *uncovenanted* mercy all who do not submit to *their* bishops. They claim a nearer connexion with the papists, than they do with other protestants.

Let us tremble and adore. Let us hail the prospect of a speedy resurrection to the successors of the martyrs. For in the fall of this tenth part of the idolatrous city, is involved the ruin of those who prevent the re-establishment of the reformation. And soon thereafter shall the friends of righteousness in the church and in the commonwealth be exalted to a station which shall be powerful and permanent. The country in which they suffered during the last struggle, may be the first to redeem its character, and to set the example to others of a kingdom which is, in fact, and by profession, one of the kingdoms of our God and his Christ. AMEN.

THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON.

LECTURE XI.

Rev. xii. 1, 3....*And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and, behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.*

RELIGION, by divine appointment, respects man in every relation of life, and renders all his temporal concerns subservient to his future and eternal state. It is therefore impossible to survey attentively the great social interests of the church of God, without, at the same time, taking a view of the condition of civil society within the bounds occupied by Christian communities.

This obvious principle is taken for granted in the whole system of sacred predictions; and upon it the symbolical language of prophecy uniformly pro-

ceeds. This language, highly figurative as it is, must nevertheless be considered as remarkable for its precision.

The same symbol, it is true, is capable of a two-fold application; because there are, in fact, two great systems of social order in the world, essentially distinct from one another, but each of them inseparably connected with the interests of religion, and accordingly with the history of Christianity, which are alike subjects of scripture prophecy—political and ecclesiastical society. The symbol, of course, according to the connexion in which it stands, may be applied to the concerns of the church, or to those of the state.

The prospective history of the Apocalypse relates to secular things, and to ecclesiastical things; and whichever of these be the subject of the passage under consideration, it forms a system, according to which the symbolical language must be interpreted. This effectually prevents confusion and indistinctness in the exposition of the Apocalypse. Due attention to this principle might have prevented the torturing of passages in some instances by Commentators, in order to employ the same symbol always to the very same object, and the indefiniteness of application, tolerated by some other able expositors, for want of any precise rules of interpretation.

The time, the place, and the character of the war between the woman and the dragon, as described in this chapter, would not have been matter of controversy, had the nature of the symbolical language

been understood, and the true principles of exposition been kept throughout in view.

The various modes of interpreting the prophecy of this chapter, which are worthy of notice, may all be reduced to three.

1. The system which applies the whole contents to the contest between Christianity and heathen Rome, terminating in the revolution effected by Constantine the Great.

2. The system which applies the first part of the chapter, from the 1st to the 6th verse, to the times of Pagan Rome; and the subsequent parts to the antichristian empire.

3. That system which applies the whole chapter to the times of the grand apostacy.

Each of these systems is supported by several eminent men; and were we to be governed by human authority, it would be difficult to determine which hypothesis it would be our duty to adopt.

Independently, however, from the argument furnished by inspection of the text itself, it appears to me necessary, upon other considerations, to apply *the war of the dragon* to the period of the antichristian apostacy.

1. This chapter, as it does not belong to the LITTLE BOOK, must belong to the SEALED BOOK; and of course to that part of it which was under the *seventh* seal. Had it indeed been a part of the little

book, it could by no means be applied to events preceding the 1260 years, of which alone that book treats: but being the continuation of the seventh *seal*, although it may run parallel with the *trumpets* under that seal, it cannot be supposed to return to that time which preceded the *opening* of the seal itself.

2. This chapter has no connexion with the trumpets, any more than one history has with another distinct history, which may happen to treat of some events which came to pass at the same period of time. It cannot therefore be referred to any one trumpet, any more than Hume's History of England can be said to belong to a particular chapter of Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. It may, nevertheless, be parallel to one or more of the trumpets. If indeed it were under the seventh trumpet, it must have respect to events subsequent to the millennium, for the seventh trumpet, in the preceding chapter, had introduced that period; but this chapter evidently precedes the millennium; and it must of course respect events under the seventh seal, *cotemporary* with some of the events of the trumpets; but not included under any one of them. The inference is irresistible. This chapter is an introduction to the *vials*.

As the *little book* was introductory to the *seventh trumpet*, designed to explain the object of the *third wo;* so are the 12th, 13th, and 14th chapters, descriptive of the state of the moral world, during the 1260 years, and designed to explain the system of

iniquity upon which the golden vials pour out their seven last plagues.

The 12th chapter synchronizes with the little book, and with each of the two succeeding chapters. It does not carry on the history of events in chronological order from the time to which the trumpets extend; but returns back, not however to the time of John the Divine, but to the seventh seal, and prepares the way for the period of the vials. This consideration determines the application of its contents to the antichristian reign: and the text itself furnishes other and more ample reasons for such an interpretation.

I proceed in this lecture, to exhibit the war of the dragon in the Roman empire, with the woman, the symbol of the true church. It is a contest between a devilish civil polity throughout the whole extent of the *earth*, and the cause of true religion in the hands of the saints.

You will permit me, in the *first* place, to introduce to your acquaintance, the principal characters engaged in this war; and in the *second* place, to give you the history of the contest.

I. *An exhibition of the principal characters engaged in this war.*

These are, upon the one side, the *woman*, supported by *Michael* and his *angels*, and upon the other, the *dragon* with his *angels*.

Both the parties appeared to the apostle John in *heaven*, and there did the contest, now under consi-

deration, commence. Verses 1, 3, 7. Let us ascertain the character of the combatants.

1. The Woman.

She is described verses 1, 2. *And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she, being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.*

She appeared as a great *wonder*—Σημειον μεγα. In the first verse of the book of Revelation, we are informed that God *signified*, εσημανε, unto his servant John, the things which must come to pass. In that place, the verb σημαινω is not to be understood as indicating that *wonder* would be excited; but as specifying the *manner* in which future events were to be brought into view. The things which must come to pass, were represented by suitable signs to John the Divine. Σημειον, in this place, is a *sign*, or *suitable representation* of some interesting object.* In verse 3, the word rendered *wonder* is the same, and ought also to be rendered *sign*, or *symbol*.

The *place*, in which the sign appeared, denotes the whole great system of ecclesiastical polity throughout the empire. Heaven may be the symbol of civil power, or of ecclesiastical polity, more or less restricted, as the connexion may require. Here, in the same *heaven*, there appeared both the woman and the dragon, and the symbol must of course be ex-

* It frequently occurs in this sense. Matth. xii. 38. and xvi. 1—4. and Rom. iv. 11.

plained of the visible church in her most extended form.

Distinct from this general church, and yet, visibly connected with it, appeared the actual church of the living God.

A *woman*, in scripture, is used to signify any *body politic*—a city, a state, or a church. We read of the daughter of Tyre, and of Babylon, as well as the daughter of Jerusalem. All nations have, indeed, been in the habits of representing cities and states under this symbol. "Rome," says Mr. Woodhouse, "is represented upon the ancient medals under the form of a woman. Britannia appears under the same emblem."

This WOMAN, revealed as a *sign in heaven*, is *the actual church of God*, scattered among the churches of the western empire. She is arrayed in the most splendid attire. Although about to fly into the wilderness, and already degraded in public estimation, she is in fact elevated upon the moon, clothed with the sun, and crowned with the stars. She is *the King's daughter, greatly desired for her beauty.** The *moon* upon which she stands, represents the actual ordinances of divine grace, appointed of the Lord, and giving light to the world, in proportion as the Lord shines upon them. The *sun*, with which she is clothed as a garment, represents the light and the righteousness of Jesus Christ, the *Sun of righteousness, and the Light of the world.* The *crown* which she wears, is the doctrine of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, and of the ministers of reconciliation, who

* Psalm xlv. 11.

succeed them in the faith and the order of the church. Her pastors are her stars and her crown.

Thus constituted, she shall become the joyful mother of children. She *cries and labours*, in her faithful struggles to multiply the seed of righteousness upon the earth.

The true church, amidst the nominally Christian world, is opposed by a formidable adversary.

2. The Dragon is her enemy.

He is described, verses 3, 4. *And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and, behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth; and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.*

Concerning this celebrated personage, there is a difference of opinion; for the interpretation which we give of the *dragon*, determines the period of history to which this vision applies.

Sir Isaac Newton conjectures the dragon to be the Greek Christian empire of Constantinople. There are some who would have it to signify the present British government, because of the use of scarlet among its officers and soldiers; and upon similar principles, the greater number of Commentators apply it to the pagan power of ancient Rome.

The sacred text, nevertheless, applies this sign to a more distinguished character—To the personage,

whom those beasts and horns that govern the kingdoms of this world, serve. The voice of inspiration declares expressly that the dragon is the devil, and we follow this decision in preference to the opinions of learned men. Verse 9. *And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.*

The dragon, the *sign*, σημειον, of *Satan* himself, *appeared in heaven* along with the woman.

It cannot therefore be applied to the pagan empire; because, whether we render *heaven* the symbol of ecclesiastical or civil polity, the church of God and the pagan empire never did contemporaneously appear in the same heaven. The pagan power never appeared in the ecclesiastical heaven, nor did the true church ever appear in the heaven of pagan power. This vision must therefore be applied to events posterior to the days of Constantine.

It respects a period of time in which Satan evidently possessed such power in the ecclesiastical system as openly to oppose the true church. What that power is, and at what time it is so employed, also appear from the text. *And, behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.* Satan appears of a *red colour*, the emblem of persecution, of cruelty, and of blood; and his seat is in the *nominal* church in heaven. He is *embodied* in the beast, the civil polity of that empire, which hath *seven heads and ten horns.* These words are illustrated in chap. xvii. 9—12. The angel explains to the writer of the Apocalypse the *mystery of the scarlet coloured beast which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The seven heads are seven*

mountains. And these are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come. And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings. This is a precise description of that empire of which the city of seven hills was the capital, and of which the government had assumed seven different heads or forms. It is described too, as actually divided into *ten* separate kingdoms, *which have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.*

We shall afterwards designate the seven hills upon which the woman or the city of Rome sitteth; mention the several successive forms of government under which the Romans lived; and give you the names of the ten kingdoms unto which this proud empire was divided.

I shall only add in this place, that the Roman empire in its divided state, being nominally Christian, but in reality antichristian, is identified with the devil, as was the serpent in paradise, and for the very same reason. That fallen spirit, in his opposition to the holiness and the happiness of man, actually possessed a creature of the serpent kind, and through it, attacked with success the mother of mankind. Therefore Satan is called the serpent. The same great adversary, and with the same malevolent design, possessed himself, in like manner, of the political power of the Roman empire, and that of each of its ten several kingdoms, and continues to influence and direct that great political system, and all its parts, in opposition to the interests of vital religion. The whole civil polity of the antichristian nations being thus animated by the god of this world, he is considered by the text as the soul, and the vi-

sible authorities, as his body; and therefore he bears the appropriate title of *the great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns.**

This dragon stood before the woman, as did the agents of Pharaoh king of Egypt before the Israelitish women, to destroy their offspring. His object was to prevent faithful ministers from labouring to convert their hearers to God, and to his cause; and to destroy all who, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the gospel of Christ.

* As this interpretation of the text represents as *diabolical* governments *the powers that be* in the dominions of antichrist, and effectually sets aside the claim of allegiance and support, out of respect to the ordinance of God, which the constituted authorities make upon the Christian citizens of Europe, it is not improper that I should devote a foot note in evidence that it is neither a novel opinion, nor unsupported by other expositors of the Apocalypse. I quote two distinguished writers of the Church of England.

"As *for the dragon* being the *Greek empire*, such an opinion is utterly irreconcileable with the plain declaration of St. John, that he is *the devil*, and nothing *but the devil*—He tells us unequivocally, that the great dragon is that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world—The circumstance of his being represented with *ten horns*, shows plainly, that *the agent*, through whose visible instrumentality he persecutes the woman, is *the Roman empire in its divided state*." *Faber in loco.*

"For *this dragon* is expressly asserted to be the *ancient serpent*, who is called *the devil*—This was seen clearly by the most ancient Commentators—The seven heads of the dragon express an immense command of worldly power—The number *ten* seems to have reference to those passages of the Apocalypse and Daniel, wherein are to be seen just so many kings or kingdoms promoting the interests of the *adversary*.—The dragon is to have great sway among the kings of the earth, whom he beguiles by the offer of that worldly power which was rejected by the Son of God." *Woodhouse in loco.*

With nominal Christian pastors, he was too successful. *His tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.*

As the *heaven* is to be understood ecclesiastically, so are the *stars*. They are ministers of religion. One class of them, it appears, adorns the *crown* of the true church; but another follows the *tail* of the dragon, the devil—that are under the pernicious influence of the *beast* which Satan possessed. Such is the degrading picture given of those pastors, who, fond of show, and ambitious of distinction, attach themselves to the train of earthly thrones or dignities; and prostitute their ministry to political purposes, in the service of the men of the present world. They follow at the *tail of the dragon, and are cast down to the earth.* They are left to promote the purposes of diabolical governments.

As this effect was produced on the priesthood, not in the days of pagan Rome, but during the apostacy, it determines the period of time to which the prophecy refers.

We shall now introduce to your acquaintance another, and a more interesting personage, engaged in this war, on the side of the woman, and in opposition to the dragon.

3. Michael.

Verses 5—7. *And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a*

place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels.

Bishop Newton refers this *man-child* to the first Christian emperor, Constantine, in violation, not only of the various reasons for explaining the prophecy of more recent events, but also of the description given in the text. The masculine Son, υἱον αρρενα, *rules the nations with a rod of iron, being caught up to God and to his throne.* This description is evidently borrowed from the prediction of the second Psalm respecting Jesus Christ. Verses 8, 9. "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." This promise was made to the only begotten of the Father, and not to the Roman emperor. It is appropriately quoted in this connexion, to show the fate of the diabolical powers that oppose the Messiah. The description is moreover applied, Rev. xix. 15. to THE WORD OF GOD—*The King of kings;* as if to prevent all mistake as to the character who *should smite* the antichristian nations—*He shall smite them with a rod of iron.*

The objection, that Messiah is not to be represented as the Son of the Christian church, but of the Jewish, is of no force. He is the Son of the church, not as being *Jewish* or *Christian;* but as the *church of God,* and *one,* under both the dispensations of

grace. He is represented here as in the first war against the same enemy—*the* SEED *of the* WOMAN *that shall bruize the serpent's head.** Still, therefore, may the church of God proclaim with joy, *Unto us a* CHILD *is born, unto us a* SON *is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders—the Prince of peace.*† Still may her faithful pastors *travail in birth again until Christ be formed in* their congregations.‡

The man-child in this text, however, does not *literally* apply. He was passed into the heavens before he gave the Revelation to his servant John, and was not, in fact, again to be born of a woman, on earth. The prediction applies to *Christ mystical.* Jesus Christ was *alone* in the work of purchasing our redemption; but he associates his seed with him, as the body of which he is the head, in the work of conquering his enemies. And he promises to his members a participation of the power given to him over the nations. Rev. ii. 26, 27. *And he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessel of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I* (Psalm ii. 9.) *received of my Father.* Although, therefore, we refuse to Constantine, whose own personal religion was at best questionable, the application of this prophecy, we readily admit upon the authority of Messiah himself, that, *this honour have all the saints.*§ Yes, the *spiritual seed,* along with *Christ the head,* are here described. "As soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children."‖

* Gen. iii. 15. † Isa. ix. 6. ‡ Gal. iv. 19.
§ Psa. cxlix. 9. ‖ Isa. lxvi. 8.

"Of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her."* "Jerusalem is the mother of us all."

Christ, the Head of the church, and Prince of the kings of the earth, as the Representative of his people, is in defiance of the old serpent, the red dragon, caught up to the throne of God, while the church flies to the wilderness during the gloomy period of 1260 years. Satan still, along with his angels, occupies a place in the heaven, the nominal church, and by means of the diabolical governments of Christendom, wages war against the cause of God. The man-child whom he sought to destroy, resists him, and at the head of his angels, conducts the war with efficacy.

As the Captain of the Lord's host, he bears the name *Michael.* This name, as well as the work of subduing the adversary, designates Messiah. מיכאל *who is like to God,* points out that personage *who thought it not robbery to be equal with God.* He is mentioned, Dan. xii. 1. *as The great Prince which standeth for the children of God's people.* And Jude, verse 9. as *The Archangel who contended with the devil.* Christ, our Lord, had driven Lucifer and his angels from heaven for their apostacy; and he now appears in the ecclesiastical heavens to conquer the same enemy.

II. *Let us take a historical view of this contest, between the true church and diabolical powers—the war of the dragon with the woman.*

* Psalm lxxxvii. 5.

From the character of each party in this war, it is sufficiently manifest to what period of history the prophecy must be applied. The only reason, arising from the text itself, which has any appearance of force in it, for applying the prediction to the pagan Roman empire, is the assertion in verse 3d, that *the dragon had the crowns upon his heads.* As *crown* is the symbol of *sovereignty,* it is inferred from this expression, that the *ten horns* were not yet erected into independent kingdoms; and that, of course, Satan carried on his opposition through the agency of imperial power, and not by means of the antichristian kingdoms.

The text, however, will not bear this commentary. If we are to infer from the words, *seven crowns upon his heads,* that the imperial power which was confessedly only the *sixth head,* existed at the time, we ought also to infer that the preceding *five heads,* and the subsequent *seventh,* were also in existence, for they are said to be *crowned* as well as the *sixth.* This is too absurd to be admitted; and the canon of criticism which leads to this absurdity, by whatever names it is supported, ought to be dismissed. The truth is, that this mode of expression is employed in order to identify the power by which Satan works. It is the Roman power, the *fourth great beast,* and being under *diabolical* influence, throughout all its changes, from the days of Romulus until the commencement of the millennium, it is justly represented as the *dragon with seven heads and ten horns,** al-

* Inattention to this obvious principle, has misled Mr. Mede, bishop Newton, and their followers. Because the primitive Chris-

though the several heads were never cotemporaneously invested with the sovereignty.

The period of the present history is, however, distinctly pointed out in another part of the chapter. That part furnishes the key to the prediction. Verse 6. *The woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. This is her place,* verse 14. *where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from*

tians considered the *pagan* empire as *possessed of the devil*, these writers were led to suppose, that the prophecy of the xiith chapter should be applied to that period. But the Roman empire is throughout all its forms *diabolical. All its heads and horns are the instruments of Satan.* Indeed, all immoral systems of government, of whatever nation, are as much identified with the devil, as was the serpent in paradise. The benevolent courtesy of Christians, their prudence, and, perhaps, in some instances, an ignoble timidity, have prevented them from speaking plainly upon this subject, to the rulers of the nations. This language was held, however, when it could be done with perfect safety.

"It is very remarkable," said bishop Newton, "that Constantine himself, and the Christians of his time, describe his conquests under the same image. Constantine saith in his epistle to Eusebius, 'Liberty being now restored, and *that dragon* being removed from the administration of public affairs, by the providence of the great God, and my ministry, I esteem the great power of God to have been made manifest even to all.' Moreover, a picture of Constantine was set up over the palace gate, with the cross over his head and under his feet, '*the great enemy of mankind*, who persecuted the church by the means of *impious tyrants* in the form of a *dragon* transfixed with a dart into the midst of his body.'" *Euseb. de vita Constant.* Lib. 3. Cap. 3.

Hostem illum et inimicum generis humani, qui impiorum tyrannorum opera Ecclesiam Dei oppugnaverat, sub draconis forma.

the face of the serpent. Time, times, and a half a time, is the well-known language of Daniel, for one year, two years, and a half year, and corresponds with the one thousand two hundred and threescore days above mentioned. *Three years and a half,* of twelve months each, make forty and two months, the period in which the church remains *heathenish and unmeasured* by God's word, Rev. xi. 2. *Forty-two months,* of thirty days each, amount to one thousand two hundred and threescore days, the period during which the witnesses against the apostacy bear testimony in sackcloth, Rev. xi. 3. It is precisely the same period during which the *woman* remains in the wilderness. Both the numbers are given for the purpose of mutual illustration and confirmation. And taking, according to the prophetic style, a day for a year, we have, as the proper period of the history of this chapter, the well-known 1260 years of antichristian usurpation.

Upon the opinion of bishop Newton, considering the period of 1260 years as mentioned in this place, by way of *anticipation,* Mr. Faber makes the following correct animadversions.

"The *prolepsis,* of which the bishop speaks, is no where to be discovered in the plain simple language of the prediction. I can only discover a plain account of *the woman's persecution during* 1260 *days;* an account which exactly tallies with the general subject of the *little book;* with the 1260 *days prophesying of the witnesses,* in the preceding chapter, and with the 42 *months tyranny of the beast,* in the succeeding chapter."

For six centuries since the advent of our Saviour, the *woman laboured* in spiritual travail; and the *great adversary* of our salvation was employed in *watching her offspring*, with design to torment and destroy them: but this

SIXTH PROPHETIC VISION

reveals the state of affairs in the moral world, about the commencement of the seventh century.

As the empire of Christianity was extending in name, it was losing in purity and godliness. The ecclesiastical *heaven* became dark and stormy. An able historian gives the following character of the sixth century.

"The public teachers and instructers of the people degenerated sadly from the apostolic character. They seemed to aim at nothing else than to sink the multitude into the most opprobrious ignorance and superstition, to efface in their minds all sense of the beauty and excellence of genuine piety, and to substitute in the place of religious principles, a blind veneration for the clergy, and a stupid zeal for a senseless round of ridiculous rites and ceremonies. To be convinced of the truth of the dismal representation we have here given of the state of religion at this time, nothing more is necessary than to cast an eye upon the doctrines now taught concerning *the worship of images and saints, the fire of purgatory, the efficacy of good works*, i. e. the observance of human rites and institutions, towards the attainment of salvation, the power of relics to heal diseases of

body and mind; and such like sordid and miserable fancies.

"In this century the cause of true religion sunk apace, and the gloomy reign of superstition extended itself in proportion to the decay of genuine piety. This lamentable decay was supplied by a multitude of rites and ceremonies. The western churches were loaded with rites by GREGORY the GREAT, who had a marvellous fecundity of genius in inventing, and an irresistible force of eloquence in recommending, superstitious observances."*

Our Lord and Saviour, employing the powers of his own prescience upon this state of the *visible* church, prospectively describes it unto his servant John: but he also assures him that the *true* church, *the woman* clothed with the sun, raised up above the moon, and crowned with stars, should not be permitted to perish. She exists amidst the prevalent corruption: and in the same *nominal* church is found her antagonist, the *old serpent*, the devil. He, however, while in the communion of the visible church, takes possession, as of the serpent in Eden, of the civil polity as best calculated to answer his purpose of drawing the stars with his tail, and of putting to death the seed of the woman.

He had always found in the *mistress of the world*, a power which he could wield, whether under the Pagan or Christian name, in opposition to actual piety; and in the beginning of the seventh century, there was at the head of the empire a man remark-

* Mosh. Eccles. Hist. Vol. II. p. 120—133. Phil. 1798.

ably qualified to answer his diabolical purposes. He is thus described by Mr. Gibbon. The character of *Phocas* is the portrait of a monster.

—"His diminutive and deformed person, the closeness of his shaggy eyebrows, his red hair, his beardless chin, and his cheek disfigured and discoloured by a formidable scar. Ignorant of letters, of laws, and even of arms, he indulged in the supreme rank a more ample privilege of lust and drunkenness; and his brutal pleasures were either injurious to his subjects, or disgraceful to himself. Without assuming the office of a prince, he renounced the profession of a soldier; and the reign of Phocas afflicted Europe with ignominious peace, and Asia with desolating war. His savage temper was inflamed by passion, hardened by fear, exasperated by resistance or reproach.

"The condemnation of the victims of his tyranny was seldom preceded by the forms of trial, and their punishment was imbittered by the refinements of cruelty: their eyes were pierced, their tongues were torn from the root, their hands and feet were amputated: some expired under the lash, others in the flames, others again were transfixed with arrows; and a simple speedy death was mercy which they could rarely obtain: the companions of Phocas were the most sensible, that neither his favour, nor their services, could protect them from a tyrant, the worthy rival of the Caligulas and Domitians of the first ages of the empire."*

This is that emperor who *gave the saints of the Most High* into the power of the *little horn*, by con-

* Hist. Dec. Vol. V. p. 448—450. Phil. 1805.

stituting pope Boniface III. in the year 606, universal bishop, and requiring all the churches to acknowledge the papal supremacy.*

The *dragon* had, besides the *seven heads, ten horns,* or kingdoms, all of which, however they might have been distinguished from one another, and from the head of the empire, were under his influence; and with the whole power of the nations at his own command, he succeeded in *dragging at his tail the third part of the stars of heaven.*

The ministers of religion, in an age of licentiousness and superstition, became the ignoble parasites of antichristian power; and instead of serving with piety and magnanimity the Redeemer of God's elect, they were degraded into diabolical instruments of opposition to the seed of the woman.†

* No man can read, without a sigh for the Christian cause in the hands of a mercenary ministry, those writings of the pastors of the church which represent tyrannical and immoral power as by the word of God, worthy of Christian approbation, and conscientious support. No *loyalist* of any country or sect, ever complimented a king more than did pope Gregory the Great, this tyrant on his accession to power. "He contented himself," says Gibbon, "to rejoice, that the piety and benignity of Phocas have been raised by Providence to the imperial throne, and to pray that his hands may be strengthened against all his enemies."

His own words are worthy of being held out as the model for all the flatterers of immoral power. They will apply to *modern* emperors and kings as well as to *Phocas.*

Greg. l. xi. Epis. 38. Indict. vi. Benignitatem vestræ pictatis ad imperiale fastigium pervenisse gaudemus. Lætentur cœli et exultet terra, et de vestris benignis actibus universæ reipublicæ populus nunc usque vehementur afflictus hilarescat.

† "The dragon, as the apostle himself teacheth us, is 'the old serpent, the devil.' He is represented with *seven heads and ten*

The exalted Mediator, who hath received from the Father power over all flesh, and who himself, the *man-child*, admits every believer into communion with him in his exaltation, sits upon high to *rule with a rod of iron* all nations, and to preserve his people from the enemy.

In allusion, not to the imperial eagle, but to the protection afforded to the children of Israel, on their emancipation from the Egyptian dragon, The *woman* was furnished with the *wings of an eagle*, Exod. xix. 4. *that she might fly into the wilderness from the face* of the serpent.

The saints were frequently driven by the frowns of power into a *literal wilderness.* Such was the case with the pious occupants of the Alpine hills of Piedmont; with those who were expelled from their parish churches in the British dominions, to worship on the barren heath and among the mountains; and with those who were compelled to emigrate

horns, to show us by whose visible agency he should persecute the *woman;* and he is said to be in heaven, because the empire *which he used as his tool*, made profession of Christianity. He is said likewise to have *a tail*, in reference to the corrupt superstition so successfully taught by the second Apocalyptic beast. He causes those *Christian bishops*, whose sees lay in the Roman empire, the third part of the *symbolical universe*, to apostatize. The appointed time, during which he is permitted to reign, is the 1260 years of the great apostacy: hence the woman is said to flee from his face, during precisely that period, into the *wilderness*, as Elijah heretofore did from the face of Ahab: and there, in the midst of the spiritual barrenness which spreads far and wide around her, she is fed with the heavenly manna of the word of God in her prepared place; as Elijah was in the waste and howling desert, by the ravens." *Faber, Diss.* Vol. II. pp. 111, 112. Lond. 1806.

to the new world, before the American continent had begun to flourish under the hand of cultivation.

The *wilderness* is, nevertheless, to be understood *metaphorically*. The faithful followers of primitive truth and order, during the 1260 years of the great apostacy, are preserved in a state of comparative poverty, remote from the riches and honours of the *earth*. While the dragon controls the *stars* and the *horns*, while Satan influences the churches and the politics of the nations, those who live in the fear of the Lord, cannot be otherwise than comparatively *a people who dwell alone, and are not numbered among the nations.*

The dragon compels them, by tyrannical impositions, to leave the *heavens* and the cultivated parts of the *earth* which he occupies—to separate themselves from the systems of criminal policy, by which he pollutes the great social concerns of Christendom. The Lord, for their preservation in the true religion, disposes them to relinquish the honours and the profit of antichristian churches and kingdoms; and to prefer, like Moses, to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin during the season in which the old serpent possesses the whole power of the Roman empire throughout all its ten kingdoms. *This is the faith and the patience of the saints.*

After the removal of the actual church into the wilderness, mentioned verse 6, there is mention made of *three* successive attacks of the dragon upon the friends of true religion. The *first* is the *war in heaven*, described verses 7—12. The *second* is the *persecution on earth*, described verses 12—16. And

the *third* is mentioned in the 17th verse. These are *three peculiarly interesting epochs,* in the contest of 1260 years duration, between the corrupt power of a *diabolical* empire, and the true church of the living God. We shall attend to each in order, and then conclude this discourse.

1. The war in heaven.

Verses 7—9. *And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

The allusion, in these words, to the rebellion of angels, and their consequent degradation from the place of blessedness, is too manifest to be misunderstood.

> Wild work in heaven—
> Go, Michael, of celestial armies prince,
> —lead forth to battle these my sons
> Invincible, lead forth my armed saints.
> ——————————the great Son of God
> To all his host on either hand thus spoke;
> Stand still in bright array, ye saints, here stand,
> Ye angels arm'd, this day from battle rest.
> And full of wrath bent on his enemies,
> Drove them before him thunder struck—
> Down from the verge of heaven. Eternal wrath
> Burnt after them to the bottomless pit. MILTON.

The *present* contest, is the same in principle with the *original* war; but it is carried on in a different place, and under a different form. The *heaven* of this place, signifies *the superior regions of ecclesiastical power;* and *Satan* acts by the *civil authority of the empire.* After the *woman,* the actual church, who maintained sound doctrine, true discipline, and the legitimate use of the sacraments, had been carried into the *wilderness,* Satan's power in ecclesiastical affairs became so great, that by its means he aimed at the entire destruction of the true religion. Still, however, he met with opposition. The Catholic church, corrupted as it was, had not been entirely forsaken by our Lord. There were saints preserved in its communion, and *Michael,* even in this *heaven,* contended with the *adversary.* The *secular* power appeared at the time of the flight of the woman to the wilderness, and for some time before, to be entirely identified with the great enemy of righteousness: he is, of course, denominated the *great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns.*

The civil power *waged this war against the woman,* at the instigation of an apostate church, and under pretence of supporting her interests.

"The protestants of this age were the WALDENSES—their first and proper name seemeth to have been *Vallenses*—they called themselves Vallenses, because they abode in the valley of tears, alluding to their situation in the vallies of Piedmont. They were called *Albigenses* from *Alby,* a city in the southern parts of France, where also great numbers of them are situated. They were afterwards de-

nominated *Valdenses* or *Waldenses*, from Peter Waldo, a rich citizen of Lyons—From *Lyons* too, they were called *Leonists*, and *Cathari*, from the professed purity of their life and doctrine, as others since have had the name of *Puritans*."*

The testimony of their very enemies show them to have been, *the woman in the wilderness*, the true *witnesses* of their own time.

Reinerius, at the head of the barbarous inquisition, justifies them in the sight of impartial men, by the reasons which he urges for their condemnation. They were, in his view, the most pernicious opponents of the church of Rome. "And this for three reasons. 1st. *This is the oldest sect;* for some say that it hath endured from the time of pope Sylvester; others from the time of the apostles. 2. It *is more general;* for there is no country in which this sect is not. 3d. Because, when all other sects beget horror in the hearers—this of the Leonists hath a great show of piety; they live justly before men, and believe all things rightly concerning God; only they blaspheme the church of Rome and the clergy."†

The historiographer Mezeray describes them in this short sentence. "They had almost the same opinions as those who are now called Calvinists."‡

Besides these *Dissenters* from the church of Rome, who were persecuted and driven about among the nations, there were within her own pale men of learning and of piety, who, opposing error and licentious-

* Newton's Diss. Vol. II. p. 256. New-York, 1794.

† Reiner. Cont. Hæret. as quoted by bishop Newton.

‡ Quoted also by the bishop of Bristol.

ness, were also persecuted often into banishment and death. It was not, however, until the *era of the* REFORMATION, that the *war of Michael and the dragon* came to its height: and it was by that event the *dragon* was cast down from his *ecclesiastical eminence*, and took his stand upon the *earth*.

While the ecclesiastical power was increasing in its demands and its influence, it was the best station for Satan to occupy: by *papal bulls and decretals*, he could direct the civil arm against the saints with the utmost effect: and the pontifical power had been gradually augmenting from the rise of the *little* horn in the year 606, until in the eleventh century it arrived at its greatest elevation.

"The *authority and lustre of the Latin church*, or to speak more properly, the power and dominion of the Roman pontiffs, arose in this century to their highest period, though they arose by degrees, and had much opposition, and many difficulties to conquer.—The popes employed every method which the most artful ambition could suggest, to render their dominion both despotic and universal. They not only aspired to the character of *supreme legislators in the church*, to an unlimited jurisdiction over all synods and councils, whether general or provincial, to the sole distribution of all ecclesiastical honours and benefices as divinely authorized and appointed for that purpose, but they carried their insolent pretensions so far as to give themselves out for LORDS OF THE UNIVERSE, *arbiters of the fate of kingdoms and empires, and supreme rulers over the kings and princes of the earth*."*

* Mosh. Eccles. Hist. Vol. II. pp. 459, 460. Phil. 1798.

By the force of truth, under the providence of God, these claims were rendered vain, and such pretensions made to cease for ever at the *reformation.*

Satan fell like lightning from heaven; the saints rejoiced in his downfal: and throughout the several churches of the nations, the friends of reform became numerous and powerful, and raised their voices in thanksgiving to God.

Verses 10—12. *And I heard a loud voice, saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them.*

The devil has been always considered as the *accuser* of the godly. He excites wicked men to raise false accusations against them; he aggravates their faults; he misrepresents their motives; and he employs every deceitful effort to diminish their influence and their usefulness. While acting as the dragon in the church, he was very successful in the work of falsehood and of blood: and in his being *cast down* the virtuous rejoice. He appeared to succeed in his accusations against them before God, as in the case of Job, while they were depressed; but now the triumphs of the gospel admonish them of the change—The Lord no longer admits the *accuser* even to a hearing.

They who survived the tempest occasioned by the reformation, recognized as their *brethren* those who fell in its defence: they make honourable mention of their names, while they follow their steps: they proclaim them victorious even in death: and, while they celebrate their prowess in the contest against the dragon, *loving not their lives;* while they recognize them as the *witnesses* of the Lord, who delivered a faithful *testimony* against the man of sin; they justly ascribe their victory to the *word* of which they were the witnesses, and to *faith* according to that word *in the blood of the Lamb.* They rejoice in the power and prevalence of the gospel of the grace of God: and if the kingdoms of this world are not as yet become in fact the kingdoms of Christ, they hail the reformation as the dawn of a brighter day; they anticipate in reaping these first ripe fruits a more abundant harvest.

Eternal *salvation* thus visited a vast body of sinners; the *strength* of the Redeemer was felt extensively in the hearts of men, and over worldly empires; and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ, became conspicuous, and received glory by that blessed event. Let it never be forgotten. *Therefore let the heavens rejoice.*

> Sole Victor, from the expulsion of his foes
> Messiah his triumphal chariot turn'd:
> To meet him all his saints, who silent stood
> Eye-witnesses of his almighty acts,
> With jubilee advanced; and as they went
> Sung triumph, and him sung victorious King. MILTON

2. The contest now assumes the form of persecution on the earth.

Verses 12, 13. *Wo to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea, for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child.*

A *short time*, comparatively, from the reformation of the 16th century, is yet remaining of the 1260 years of the apostacy, at the expiration of which, Rev. xx. 2. Satan is to be bound *one thousand years.* Had we dated the *war in heaven* at the time of Constantine, upon no allowable principle of interpretation could the remaining period be called ολιγον καιρον, a *short season.* A space of upwards of 1500 years could not be *short*, compared with the whole time of the Apocalyptical predictions, which cannot from the apostolical age until the millennium amount to 2000 years.

It will be acknowledged by all, that if the war in heaven does not symbolize the struggles of Christianity with pagan power, it must be applied, as we have done, to the protestant reformation; and the events now under consideration will of course be posterior to that remarkable era of history.

These verses accordingly designate the mode of warfare practised by the *dragon* against the church, subsequent to the time in which the power of ecclesiastical domination received its death-blow.

The place upon which the contest of Satan with the church of God is now carried on, is the *symbolical earth*—the collective body of the population of the empire.* The dragon was cast down from his ecclesiastical eminence, when the power of the church of Rome and the papacy was so far reduced by the effect of the reformation, as to lose in a great measure its terrors to the saints.

The *adversary* still actuates that apostate church, as well as the empire. He still disturbs individual believers, and *goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.* He never ceases to oppose piety in every place: but his power to affect injuriously THE GREAT SOCIAL CONCERNS OF THE MORAL WORLD, the proper subject of the Apocalyptical predictions, is now by way of eminence displayed on the *symbolical earth.*

"When the *age of superstition* and ecclesiastical tyranny was past; when the *papal thunders* were no longer regarded,—he took his stand upon the *earth,* and again renewed his attacks upon the *woman and her mystic offspring.*—The Roman church was henceforth only an *inferior consideration* with him: like a worn-out instrument, its blows were not now attended with their former effects: a new station must be assumed, whence in an age of literature and refinement, the *woman* and the *remnant* of her seed might be assailed with a greater probability of victory."†

He descends among the *mass of the people,* now in consequence of the reformation become of more

* Page 127. † Faber.

importance in both church and state than they had heretofore been, *having great wrath* because he anticipated, from the combined influence of religion, and the spirit of freedom with which it was accompanied, the total subversion of his empire.

He changed the mode of his warfare according to existing circumstances; and he succeeded. *Wo to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down to you.* These words are a warning to the Christian world, that the devil now has descended from the throne and the altar; and will henceforward do more injury to mankind, whether in a quiescent or agitated condition, whether of the earth or of the sea, by *popular weapons,* than either by papal bulls, or by the sword of the magistrate which enforced the *decretals* of the church.

It is asserted for the *comfort* of the saints in the 14th verse, that the *woman* had been previously provided with *the wings of an eagle,* to fly to a place of safety, and that she shall there find spiritual *nourishment* until the antichristian period of 1260 years is come to an end.

The principal design, however, of repeating in this place what had been before the *war in heaven* declared distinctly in verse 6, respecting the *sojourn* of the woman in the wilderness, appears to me to have been entirely overlooked by the several expositors of the prophecy. This circumstance has occasioned much confusion in their whole interpretation. Even Mr. Faber, who has approached nearest to the true meaning of this chapter, has been guilty of this omission. Indeed I cannot avoid considering

so great and so general a misapprehension, as conclusive evidence of the success of the adversary in the new mode of warfare which he has adopted since the era of the reformation. And yet, as if to anticipate and prevent the general deception, the Holy Ghost in this verse puts us distinctly in mind, that, however great the benefits of the reformation, and however much we are relieved from the oppression of antichristian power in church and state by that event, still *the true church is in the wilderness*, and must continue to sojourn there until the expiration of the *time, times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.* Pure and undefiled Christianity shall in no place of the empire receive a permanent establishment until that period is expired. It is at best only a *mixed system*, which is established in power, and supported by the policy even of the protestant nations. The true church, the woman standing upon the moon, clad in the lustre of the Sun of righteousness, and crowned with her apostolical stars, is still in the wilderness: destitute of the smiles of the higher powers; deprived of the fatness of the land; but protected and supported by the word of the Lord her God. This is the chief design of the 14th verse. The text then proceeds to *describe the new mode of warfare* employed by the enemy.

Verse 15. *And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.*

A *flood of water* is a very expressive metaphor, and is applied with great latitude to very different objects. It denotes victorious armies, Isa. viii. 7.

Nah. i. 8. Jer. xlvi. 7. Ezek. xxvi. 3. It denotes any threatening assemblage of ungodly men, Psa. xviii. 4. and xciii. 3. It denotes divine judgments, of whatever kind, Psa. xxxvi. 6. and lxxvii. 19. A great abundance of temporal or spiritual blessings, is not unfrequently designated by a flood of waters, Job xx. 17. Ezek. xlvii. 5. Generally, indeed, a flood designates something destructive, and is very often employed to represent troubles, whether persecutions and temptations, or profaneness and heresies, Psa. lxix. 2. Isa. lix. 19. Matt. vii. 25.

In this case, it must be understood of some evil proceeding from *Satan*, with design to subvert the true religion, throughout the Roman empire. It is also different from the weapons he employed during the *war in heaven*, in contending with the reformers—not the anathemas of the pope, and the sword of the empire. It is more obviously of the character of a spiritual adversary, and partakes less of the nature of *reasons of state* for opposing the church—it proceeds directly out of the mouth of the serpent. It is of course of a more popular character, and affects the mass of the multitude of antichristian men—A wo to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea: and to complete its description, from the text before us, it is authorized by the civil polity; for the serpent is still *the seven-headed ten-horned dragon.*

This diabolical flood denotes the *torrent of heresies and licentiousness* in both principle and practice, which succeeded in Europe the work of reform, and which received protection and countenance from the higher powers. False doctrines were *legalized by*

acts of toleration; or otherwise by authoritative decrees became a part of the civil constitution.

The serpent's design against the *woman* was to *cause her to be carried away of the flood;* and he too far succeeded in blending with truth his own falsehood. He thus obscured the light of revelation: many pious men were perplexed by the multitude of discordant opinions which were afloat around them: the exertions of the actual church of God became, by the disunion of her sons, less powerful against the common foe of all the saints: nominal Christians lived with the world, while they professed to belong to the seed of Abraham: and by the confusion of tongues which obtained among the builders of the temple, the work of our reforming ancestors was not only retarded, but also permitted by the neglect, the timidity, the ignorance, and the falling away of many of their descendants, to sink into forgetfulness.

Amidst the general defection of the protestant churches, there is preserved, as in ancient Israel, a *remnant according to the election of grace.* Verse 16. *And the earth helped the woman; and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.*

Had all those *inhabiters of the Latin earth,* who did not belong to the body of true believers, returned in their former bigotry to the bosom of the church of Rome, it would have been easy, humanly speaking, to crush the church in the wilderness: but the prevalence of heresies, and even of infidelity, among the high and the low, if it was to the multitude of

deluded men a wo, proved by the disunion, and the indifference for truth or error which it created, a wall of defence to the faithful that remained. The earth opened her own mouth, and swallowed up the diabolical flood, and thus undesignedly helped the woman.

The confusion produced in the present convulsions of Europe, owing to the prevalence of impious opinions, explains the expression, "the devil has great wrath, because he knows his time is short." The events of the French revolution, a *terrible wo to the nations,* demonstrates the effects of the diabolical flood upon the earth that swallowed it; while the church amidst the storm, although in the wilderness, is permitted to remain in the profession of truth, and the comparatively undisturbed maintenance of the faith of God's elect.

History confirms this interpretation, by demonstrating that we have not mistaken the character of the times. "In the sixteenth century there lay concealed in different parts of Europe several persons, who entertained a violent enmity against religion in general, and in a more especial manner against the gospel; and who, both in their writings and in their private conversation, sowed the seeds of impiety and error. It is even reported that in certain provinces of *France* and *Italy,* schools were erected whence these impious doctrines issued."*

"Our English youth, who travelled even so early as the reign of *James I.* returned too often with

* Mosheim.

the seeds of vice and infidelity, which they gathered with the knowledge and the manners of more polished countries; and the court of *Charles II.* displays, in a very striking manner, the principles and habits which the king and his nobles had learned upon the continent."*

James II. who as well as his brother Charles, was himself a papist, while full of enmity toward the English and Scottish Presbyterians, found it convenient to afford these pious people some mitigation of the persecution under which they laboured, by proclaiming an act of toleration intended to cover the opinions of his own court. "By the incessant labours of Voltaire, his diabolical principles were protected by the sovereigns of Russia, Poland, and Prussia, and by an innumerable host of landgraves, margraves, dukes, and princes. They had penetrated into Bohemia, Austria, Spain, Switzerland, and Italy. They had many zealous advocates in England: they had thoroughly impregnated France: and in short, had more or less pervaded the whole Roman earth, where the dragon had now taken his station, after his expulsion from the symbolical heaven."†

Systems hostile to the grace of God, and to the merits of Jesus Christ, Socinianism and avowed infidelity, together with the several pernicious heresies connected with such abominable and impious doctrines, received, as they came out of the mouth of the serpent, the countenance of the constituted authorities of the several kingdoms of the man of sin.

* Hist. Inter. Prop. † Faber.

We live, brethren, in the age pointed out in this prophecy. Since the revival of literature in Europe, and the corresponding liberality of sentiment relative to the civil and religious rights of men, which generally prevails, persecution carried on directly against the saints has become unfashionable. The dragon wages war by the flood of error which prevails over the nations. He has succeeded in poisoning the fountains and the streams of literature; and thus has caused the higher ranks of life to be carried away of the flood of infidelity, or of indifference to all religion. The celebrated *Condorcet*, describing the progress of the human mind, undesignedly gives the character of his own age as carried away by this diabolical flood.

"There was a *class of men* in Europe, whose chief object was to attack prejudices in the very asylums, where the *clergy, the schools, the governments, and the ancient corporations*, had received and protected them—In England, Collins and Bolingbroke; in France, Bayle, Fontenelle, Voltaire, and Montesquieu, and *the schools formed by these men*—Assuming every tone, taking every shape, from the ludicrous to the pathetic, from the most learned and extensive compilation to the novel or petty pamphlet—adopting the words, *reason, toleration, and humanity*, as their signal and call to arms."

This part of the prophecy synchronizes with the commencement of the *third wo* trumpet; with the *sixth vial*, as will afterwards more fully appear; and with the *harvest* of God's wrath.

3. The concluding verse of this chapter describes *the last part of the contest.*

Verse 17. *And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

"This will be," said Mr. Faber, "the last great effort of Satan against the church previous to the commencement of the millennium. We know that it must commence after the dragon has been cast out of heaven; after he has taken his station upon earth; after he has vomited forth a flood against the mystic woman; after the earth has swallowed up the flood; when every current event bears testimony that the third wo trumpet is sounding, that the vials of the last plagues are pouring out, and that Satan is come down having great wrath."*

* This writer, whose judgment is often perverted by political prejudice, considers "the *kingdom of England*" as *identified with the church of God*, and of course a *special object* of this *last* war. He might have spared his fears upon this account. However unable Mr. Faber may be to distinguish between the *present British government*, and the actual church of Christ, there is no difficulty in making such distinction. The difference between the two was well known to the author of prophecy. It is maintained in the prophecy itself. It is readily perceived by the saints. Whatever may be the fate of the British crown and constitution, England is not *as a kingdom* the object of this war. It is waged against quite a different class of men—against those *who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.* Surely those who reap the fruits of the most fertile fields, and enjoy the fatness of the land, cannot be "the woman in the wilderness." Upon no principle of legitimate criticism, can this character be applied to

This *last war* waged by the dragon is identified with that in which the *witnesses* are slain; and will be more *obviously* a persecution of the saints, than that kind of warfare which at present exists.

When the enemy came in, as in the period formerly described, *like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifted up a standard against him.**

This promise has been accomplished. However great the *flood of errors* with which Satan has been endeavouring to *carry away* the saints, the *Spirit of the Lord* hath supported and encouraged *the seed of the righteous*, and they have overcome by the *blood of the Lamb, and the testimony which they hold.*

They have met every heresy with piety and argument: they have refuted every calumny against the gospel with meekness and fear: they have caused every appeal to reason and to literature, to redound to the glory of the God of truth, in the confusion of their adversaries: they have met the scholar, the phi-

"the protestant kingdom of England," or to its great, splendid, and opulent hierarchy. There are, it is true, thousands in his majesty's dominions, yea, many within the very pale of the establishment, who witness for the truth, and unto whom the description, in part at least, applies. But whatever may prove, in that day, to be the condition personally of the learned VICAR OF STOCKTON-UPON-TEES, he need not apprehend that this *last* war *waged by the dragon* against the *church in the wilderness who keep the commandments of God*, will be a persecution of the royal family, or of "the lords spiritual and temporal" of Great Britain. It is far more likely to fall upon that despised people, the PURITANS, whom Mr. Faber, and the author quoted by him with approbation,† very illiberally hold up to *general detestation for hypocrisy and fanaticism.*

* Isa. lix. 19.

† Vol. II. p. 120.

losopher, the critic, and the sceptic, and have ably and learnedly demonstrated that Christianity is worthy of our faith, that its peculiar doctrines are capable of vindication and of proof, and that it is the only religion which gives to the true God the praise which is worthy of him; which affords to the sinner the only solid hope of reconciliation with God; and which shall eventually bless the inhabitants of the earth with civilization, with comfort, and with peace.

The present era of Christianity deserves to be called "THE AGE OF REASON," upon far different principles from those which induced Mr. Thomas Paine to bestow upon it that name. More argument and intellect have been employed since the time of the protestant reformation in examining and illustrating the doctrine of Christ, than there have been employed in the same way at any period since the world began. The banner of truth has been eminently displayed; and the art of printing, in the providence of God, hath stamped perpetuity upon the labours of the faithful. Future generations shall reap from the labours of the present, although it has been *a seed-time of tears*, a very luxuriant harvest. *There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.*

To the symbolical earth, nevertheless, the flood of diabolical opinions which flowed from the *mouth of the dragon*, proved a great *wo*. And the enemy *was wroth* at the disappointment. Again he changes the *manner* of attack. It is the dragon in all the terror

of tyrannical persecuting power, the diabolical beast with seven heads and ten horns, that puts the witnesses to death. The civil sword is again unsheathed, and in this last contest bathed in the blood of martyrdom. "The dragon was *wroth with the woman*, and went to *make war upon the remnant* of her seed."*

It is in relation to former martyrs, to those who had suffered under pagan and papal domination, that the objects of this war are called the *remnant*. Their character is put beyond a doubt. Theirs is a *real*, not a *nominal* religion, a *soul-sanctifying*, not a *political* Christianity. *They keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.* "They are those," said Dr. Johnston, "who in matters of religion strictly adhere to the commandments of God. They do not make void the law of God by human traditions, nor teach or believe as doctrines of God, the commandments of men. They firmly believe, and heartily approve of that testimony which is given in the sacred scriptures, of the natures, character, offices, and religion of Jesus Christ, and they boldly give their testimony to these. It is scarcely possible to draw a more exact and marked description of the character of true Christians than this one."

CONCLUSION.

From this exposition, Christians, and we leave it with your understanding and your conscience to judge whether it be not agreeable to the word of

* Page 329.

God—from this exposition, you may learn in what estimation you are to hold the civil and ecclesiastical establishments of the antichristian empire. If you are willing to make a proper estimate of their *moral* character; if you would examine them in the clear light of this divine prospective history; if you would judge of them as the infallible God hath described them, you will have an unwavering conviction of their being *diabolical* establishments, opposed alike to the Son of God, and to the remnant of the church's seed—the *dragon* against the *wowan* and the *man-child.* I leave you to infer what claim they have upon your affections, upon your approbation, and your prayers. I address myself to you, who are the disciples of my Saviour, who believe in his name and espouse his cause, and who are placed in the ranks under Michael the Archangel and captain of the Lord's host, I beseech you, dear brethren, never permit yourselves to mistake the nature of this contest.

Let not true religion ever be in your estimation identified with the *cruel dragon,* with any of his *heads or of his horns.* Let not your eyes be dazzled by the glare of his power, or your hearts misguided by the *stars* which are swept from *heaven to earth,* or suspended at the *tail* of the persecuting monster—the pastors whom he *keeps* to serve him. Let not your sympathies be withdrawn from that mourning widow in the wilderness—from those witnesses clothed in sackcloth—let them not be misplaced upon those corrupt systems which Jehovah hath sworn in his justice to destroy. I urge upon Christian principles, that which is the evident moral

and political duty of this rising empire, this great and growing republic. I urge it upon you from the considerations which my text suggests, not to imitate the maxims of social order, not to covet the policy, or approve of the conduct, of the antichristian nations of Europe. Amity, commerce, and peace with them all, you may, and you ought, upon principles of just reciprocity, to cultivate; but no entangling alliances, no identification of feelings and of interests, no community of moral or religious opinions, with powers influenced by the *old serpent, the great red dragon.*

You will never forget, that the Spirit of God denominates the errors, the show of learning, the philosophism, of the enemies of the doctrines of grace, and of the scriptures, a *flood from the mouth of the serpent;* and from a distance you will contemplate with astonishment the wo which it brings upon the kingdoms which imbibed the poison: you will consider as the predicted effects of this flood, the desolating judgments of modern Europe; and you will, I trust, stand in awe, and unhesitatingly reject the impious innovations from among you. You have witnessed in the impiety, the licentiousness, the horrors, and the massacres, of Revolutionary France, the fruits which they yield. In proportion as you deviate from evangelical doctrine, and Christian morality, you expose yourselves to similar danger.

Mistake me not. I urge this detestation of heresy and infidelity, not for the base purpose of diverting your attention from the *ten-horned dragon* himself: not for the purpose of directing your attach-

ment to the old and corrupt establishments of Europe. No. I am not the apologist of superstition, of hypocrisy, or of despotism. I do not wish to contribute to the prolongation of any *diabolical* power. My prayers are against *all the horns* of the beast: they are in union with the cry which you hear from the altar, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

The reply to this prayer is admonitory to us. It checks impatience. Rest, then, my brethren, until the catalogue of martyrs is complete, then shall the nations cease to be impious and tyrannical.

There is a day of trial approaching the Lord's people in the world. It is not upon the 11th chapter alone we rest the belief that the slaughter of the witnesses is yet future. It appears from other parts of the Apocalypse. It appears from this chapter. The concluding passage, the last war of the dragon, synchronizes with a part of the *third wo*—with the death of the witnesses—with the vintage—and with the last of the vials.

We do not predict future judgments for your discouragement. Under the care of the Shepherd of Israel, we fear no evil. "May we be found like Daniel, to *rest and stand in our lot at the end of the day.*" AMEN.

THE TWO BEASTS.

LECTURE XII.

Rev. xiii. 1, 2, 11. *And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.—And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.*

THE prophet Zechariah, who accompanied in the work of restoration and reform, the *two anointed witnesses* of the Lord, Joshua and Zerubbabel, was instructed, by the angel that communed with him, to *cry, saying, The Lord shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.* In order to illustrate the promise, he was favoured with a prophetic vision. "Then lifted I up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, *four horns*—these are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. And the Lord show-

ed me *four carpenters*—these are come to *fray them*, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah."*

Long have the agents employed by the Lord, with the instruments of his indignation, been at work in *fraying the horns* which have scattered Judah, although the work is not yet accomplished. He who promised, is nevertheless able to perform: and he will perform it, when "the time to favour Zion, the set time, is come."

In the mean time, let us learn to live by faith, and derive instruction from the inspired history given of the enemy.

This chapter is the most explicit and comprehensive history which we have of the great apostacy of 1260 years, both as it respects the *secular beast*, and the *ecclesiastical beast*, as well as the *living image* of the imperial beast, which the ecclesiastical power has set up in the *office of the papacy*.

It is my design in this discourse, according to promise,† to give you the interpretation of the FIRST BEAST, *the ten-horned beast of the sea*—of the SECOND BEAST, *the two-horned beast of the earth*—together with *the* IMAGE *of the beast, his* MARK, *his* NAME, *and the* NUMBER *of his name.*

I. *The seven-headed ten-horned beast.*

When the apostle John had this *seventh prophetic vision*, he was standing upon the *sand of the sea.*

* Zech. i. 17—21.

† Page 249, to which the reader is referred.

The *scenery* corresponds with the *representation;* and probably too, the scite is intended to designate the condition of the empire at the time to which this prophecy refers. "The sand of the sea, situated between the sea and the dry land, signifies a state of civil society, when the convulsions of the preceding fluctuating state are just ending, and the calmness and firmness of established government are just commencing."*

"The first character introduced to view in the vision, is one with which we have been previously made acquainted. He is here, however, more fully and minutely described. The prophet, after having conducted us, as it were, behind the scenes, and shown us that every string, both of the great apostacy, and of the tyranny of antichrist, is in reality worked by the *infernal serpent,* next proceeds to bring us acquainted with the characters of the *ostensible agents,* by whose instrumentality, and through whose instigation, the church was to be persecuted through the long period of 1260 years. In the preceding chapter, *the dragon* is represented as persecuting *the woman* with his *seven heads and ten horns:* here we have the symbol of a *beast,* which has likewise *seven heads and ten horns.* Now since the *dragon* is declared to be the *devil,* the *heads and the horns,* which he is described as using against the *woman,* must be the heads and the horns of *some power subservient to his views.* This POWER is now brought upon the stage."†

This first beast is the SECULAR POWER *of the Roman empire in its divided state.*

* Johnston. † Faber in loco.

"Thus far," said bishop Newton, "both ancients and moderns, papists and protestants, are agreed." The evidence is so clear, that no one can doubt the design of pointing out the Roman power by this vision: and the following considerations will show that the description applies to the *secular power* of the *antichristian* empire.

1. We cannot consent, as a compliment to the papists, so far to violate the express decisions of the text itself, as to apply it to the *pagan* empire, not only because, then there were not ten horns, or distinct kingdoms, within its bounds; but especially because this beast is to remain 1260 years, verse 5: and the pagan empire from the Augustan age to the accession of Constantine the Great, endured only about 350 years: even from the days of Romulus its founder, until it ceased to be pagan, the city of Rome had not stood 1100 years, and it had nothing to do with the history of the church for the greater part of that period. It cannot, therefore, be pagan Rome that received power to act against the saints, πολεμον ποιησαι, *Forty and two prophetic months.*

We have already observed, that these chapters, from the xith to the xvth, are especially designed to prepare the way for the account given of the effusion of the *vials;* and that they of course refer to the antichristian period.

Still, however, the question arises concerning this *first beast;* is it the symbol of the secular empire in general, or of the papacy?

The principles of exposition, upon which I have hitherto proceeded, took for granted what now plain-

ly appears, that *three* distinct antichristian powers are described in this chapter, the FIRST BEAST *with ten horns*, or the secular Roman empire; the SECOND BEAST *with two horns like a lamb*, or the ecclesiastical empire; the IMAGE *of the first beast made by the second*, or the papal power.

Thus, with perfect accuracy, does the Apocalypse itself distinguish the several great powers of the apostacy, assigning to each its proper work and character; and effectually correct the too common mistake of rendering the *temporal power* of the pope, which arose in 756, the same with the beast which is to continue 42 months, or 1260 years.

It was never the design of the sacred prediction to identify, contrary to matter of fact, the petty principality of the pope as a temporal power, with the great empire: in that character he neither united or governed the several nations of Europe: he had no power to influence the condition of the church over the Latin earth: and he occupied but a very inferior rank in the great family of nations: and what abundantly testifies the absurdity of making the temporal power of the papacy the same as the beast, is that that power is now entirely at an end, while the beast still reigns, and must reign, until the time of the end.

2. That this first beast is the *secular* Roman empire, is manifest from the prophecy of Daniel.

Dan. vii. 2, 3, 7, 17, 23, 24. *Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four*

great beasts came up from the sea—fourth beast dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it had ten horns—These great beasts, which are four, are four kings—The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon the earth—And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise.

This prophecy runs parallel to that of the second chapter, and runs down from the time of Nebuchadnezzar until the millennium. In chap. ii. the four monarchies are represented by the four parts of one *great image*—One great continuous system of idolatry: 1. The head of gold; 2. The breast and arms of silver; 3. The belly and thighs of brass; 4. The legs of iron, and the toes of the feet, part of iron and part of clay, to designate, as the prophet says, that this *kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken—they shall not cleave one to another.** In verse 38, Daniel says to Nebuchadnezzar, "Thou art this head of gold," and in verse 44, he assures us, that the reign of these broken kingdoms, symbolized by the ten toes of mixed iron and clay, should terminate only with the commencement of the reign of Christ in the millennium.

The vision of the seventh chapter terminates at the same time, verse 27. *When the kingdom, and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.*

* Daniel ii. 32, 33, 42, 43.

The fourth kingdom, in the *dream* of Nebuchadnezzar, therefore, coincides with the fourth in the *vision* of Daniel; and the ten toes of the image answer to the ten horns of the fourth beast.

The formal design of these prophecies is, to give a comprehensive view of the great and idolatrous prostitution of civil power during the specified time; and to give warning of the opposition to true religion which should uniformly, for that period, characterize the several systems of government among the nations. We are not then to suppose that the apostle John, or rather the God who inspired him, would deviate in the Apocalypse from this plan of the prophetical history. Since the *beast* of Daniel is the Roman empire in its secular character, the *beast* of John must be the same.*

Daniel's *fourth beast* is the Roman empire throughout. The fourth beast with ten horns is that empire in its divided state.

The *little horn*, diverse from all the rest, indeed symbolizes, as we shall hereafter show, *ecclesiastical power*, and answers to the *second beast* of this chapter; but the beast with ten horns is the same in both cases, and designates not the ecclesiastical, but the civil empire, with its several kingdoms.

3. This interpretation is supported by the other parts of the Revelation which speak of the beast.

In chapter xvii. 3. the ecclesiastical state, under the symbol of a great harlot, is distinguished from

* This idea has already been discussed in these Lectures. See pages 44, and 79—85. and 118—123.

the *scarlet-coloured beast* which supports her: it is the secular power, not the *papacy*, that bears up this prostitute system of religion: and it is the *same beast* with that now under consideration, for it has *seven heads and ten horns.**

This chapter throughout is a commentary upon the xiiith, and maintains the distinction between the three great parties already mentioned—the state, the church, and the papacy—or the beast, the harlot woman, and the image of the beast.

In chap. xix. 20. these three parties are again mentioned as distinguished from one another, at their downfal. The ecclesiastical system is, in this case, as well as in others hereafter to be explained, denominated the *false prophet*, and distinguished both from the *beast* and from his *image*.

4. A commentary on the text will furnish the strongest reasons for applying to the secular power this prophecy.

I saw a beast rise up out of the sea. Θηριον is a *wild beast*, and the symbol of *tyrannical and impious power*.† The *sea* denotes multitudes of men in a state of tumult or disorder. All the four great monarchies arose, according to Dan. vii. 2. from the disorders of the community of nations, agitated by malignant passions; and the system of apostacy from Christianity is peculiarly owing to the same cause.

This impious and tyrannical power had *seven heads and ten horns*. These *seven heads* have a two-fold

* See page 334. † See page 44.

signification. Chap. xvii. 9, 10. *The seven heads are seven mountains, upon which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings.* This phrase denotes some power, the capital of which was located on seven well-known hills; and of course points out the empire of the city of seven hills, (urbs septicollis.)

Rome was built upon so many distinct mountains, called by her own historians, Palatinus, Cœlius, Capitolinus, Aventinus, Quirinalis, Viminalis, Esquilinus. The administration of supreme power in this commonwealth passed under various *forms;* and these different forms are called *kings,* because each was, in its turn, supreme. *These* are also designated by the *seven heads. There are seven kings: Five,* said the interpreter, explaining the mystery of the beast, *are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come.* Five different forms of government existed over the people of Rome before the time of the vision; the sixth one was then in being; and the seventh was still future. The "five fallen" are, kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, and military tribunes, with consular authority. The *one* which then existed, was the *sixth* head,—the emperors. The other was to succeed the emperors, and as yet *to come,* when the explanation was given by the angel (chap. xvii. 7.) to John the Divine.

We have an account of many controversies about the occupancy of thrones, and the rights of kings, upon the records of history; and in some instances it is not easy to determine among the claimants, the person in whom is invested either the title or the actual possession. We are not, therefore, to be sur-

prised at the fact, that there is a difference of opinion as to the *seventh head* of the Roman empire. In such cases prejudices and wishes always have some influence in forming our decisions; and it is, perhaps, as difficult now to examine the subject impartially, as if the question were to be in fact agitated throughout the Christian world, who shall at this day be elevated to the imperial throne, and be universally recognized among the nations as the successor of the Cæsars.

I approach, brethren, this subject with confidence, because I have *cautiously* examined the claims of the several candidates; and I am not sensible of any respect for any one of them more than for another. The decision will not affect their power or their rank among their competitors. It only determines to which of them the word of God assigns the *pre-eminence in bestiality.*

We are endeavouring to ascertain the *seventh* head of the *beast of the sea;* and as it was in possession *of ten horns which were crowned,* we must look out for the head of the empire at some time subsequent to its dismemberment by the northern barbarians. By this consideration we effectually exclude all the heads of the empire previous to the fall of Augustulus under the power of Odoacer in the year four hundred and seventy-five.

We have already set aside the claims of the *papacy,* although supported by the general voice of the protestant commentators.

The power of the pope as a *temporal prince,* was never of any importance among the kingdoms of the

empire.* As a *spiritual power*, he was indeed very great; and it was in this capacity alone that he claimed the supremacy over church and state: but it is the *secular head* of the empire that we are now endeavouring to ascertain. The spiritual empire being the *little horn* springing up among the *secular ten*, cannot be identified with the beast; or the seventh head: and, described in this chapter as *another beast*, we exclude him entirely from the *headship* of the first beast.

We must look for the seventh head of the western empire among the great powers of Europe. Let us avail ourselves of the light of revelation in our examination of Roman history.

Of the *seventh* head the angel said to John the Divine, at the time referred to in this vision, when the *sixth*, or imperial head, was still in existence. Chap. xvii. 10. *the other is not yet come; and when he cometh he must continue a short space.* The seventh form of government is, according to this text, to be of comparatively short duration.

It must be recollected, that however inadmissible it be to represent a *horn*, as such, *the same with the beast itself*, because it is only a partial power in a certain district of the empire, yet *each head* is necessarily *identified with the beast*, because it is the form of government over the whole empire. When the beast is mentioned, it includes head and horns; when

* The fact of his governing in the *capital* city, does not make him *head* of the empire. Compared with other powers he was no more than the mayor of a city, or the lieutenant of a province.

head is mentioned, it includes also the horns: but not so when a horn only is mentioned.

Concerning the beast under the seventh form or head, it is intimated in verse 11, that doubts should be entertained whether *he was or is not.* His existence is not so *obvious* under this form as it formerly had been. It nevertheless *is* in *reality.* His *real* existence, though not so *evident* as to preclude all doubts about the fact, and all difficulty in identifying him, is a part of his character which is often repeated.

Chap. xvii. 8, 11. *The beast that thou sawest* WAS, AND IS NOT, *and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder when they behold the beast that* WAS, AND IS NOT, AND YET IS, *even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.*

He was, and is not, and yet is, appears to be a contradiction. Such a mode of speech, is, however, not uncommon in scripture. The Christian speaks of himself, as the text speaks of antichristian power. *I am crucified—nevertheless I live, yet not I.* The apostle Paul speaks not in this case of *natural* life; for if he did, it would be a contradiction: natural *life* and *death,* could not be predicated of him at one and the same time. He speaks of a *life to sin,* which is crucified, and of a *life to godliness,* which he leads not of himself, but by the power of God. This idea resolves the problem.

The Apocalyptical beast is the arbitrary and impious power of the Roman empire. The *existence* of power is obvious to all. Its *unity* of character is not so

evident. Let us paraphrase the words, and the obscurity is dispelled. *The beast was, and is not, and yet is.* Impious power *did* extend over all the empire, there *is not now any one* supreme power actually ruling the whole empire, and yet there are impious powers over all the nations of the empire, connected in such a manner as to make them still one great family. This is the plain matter of fact. It perfectly corresponds with the text, and with the history; and we take it therefore to be the true interpretation of the prophecy. He unto whom the college of civilized nations have given the *precedency* among the several powers, is the head; and the governments of the several distinct nations are the horns of the beast. The whole civil power of the empire is the beast with ten horns.

The *wounding*, spoken of chap. xiii. 3. has been improperly confounded with this *apparent non-existence* of the seventh and last head—the septimo-octave.

The beast was *wounded;* but not *killed.* The wound, though *deadly,* if no relief had been administered, did in fact admit of a cure. It was *healed. It is the first beast whose deadly wound was healed;* and the wound had been received in *the sixth head.*

Mr. Faber alleges that this was given, not to the *power,* but to the *character* of the head of the empire. That it was inflicted by Constantine the Great by the establishment of Christianity over Paganism: and that the Roman empire under Christian administration ceased to be a *beast.*

This interpretation of the *wound* is every way erroneous. 1. It contradicts Daniel's prophecy, which

represents the *fourth beast* as continuing, without intermission, from his rise to the millennium. The prophet would have given notice, had there been an intermission of three or four hundred years: But under all its changes, the Roman empire is beastly.

2. It violates the symbolical language: for the text does not say that the beast was *tamed*, or destroyed: and a wound affects not the *nature* of beast or man, although it may diminish *strength*, or put an end to *exertion—as it were wounded to death.*

3. It contradicts history. Constantine the Great, and his successors, were tyrants, although avowedly Christian. In patronizing the hierarchy, in new-modelling, at their own pleasure, the order of the church, they usurped a spiritual supremacy over the conscience; and if they delivered the church from *pagan* persecution, their own policy was still of a persecuting character in relation to the friends of primitive order in the Christian commonwealth. The beast, in fact, continued.

4. It is inconsistent with Mr. Faber himself. He does not hesitate to denominate Charlemagne a *beastly power;* but we are utterly at a loss to know upon what principle of religion or of morals, Constantine is so far to have the preference over Charles, as to justify any Christian expositor in representing him as slaying the beast which the other had revived. The latter we know had a connexion with the papacy, which the former could not have; but we are not now considering the papal suprema-

cy. The *secular* empire is the first beast; and the Roman power was as tyrannical and immoral in the hands of the first Christian emperors, as it afterwards proved in the hands of its great restorer in the ninth century.

We therefore consider the interpretation of bishop Newton as thus far correct. "The sixth head was wounded as it were to death, when the Roman empire was overturned by the northern nations, and an end was put to the very name of emperor in Augustulus."

Upon the throne of Constantinople still sat the representative of the empire, although it appeared as if the imperial head of the fourth beast was utterly cut off by the sword of Odoacer—*wounded by the sword.* For a few years the kings of the Goths ruled over the mistress of the nations; but the ancient frame of Roman government still remained,* and "the Roman lawyers and statesmen asserted the indefeasible dominion of the emperors of the east, who still aspired to deliver their reputed subjects from the usurpation of barbarians and heretics."† Justinian the emperor, by the skill and prowess of Belisarius, and of Narses, succeeded in healing the wound of the sixth or imperial head, by the conquest of Italy, although Rome was reduced into a provincial rank as a tributary dukedom subject to the exarch of Ravenna.‡

* See pages 136, 138. † Mavor.

‡ It ought not to be objected to this account of healing the wound of the *sixth* head, that the emperor had his seat at Constantinople, for this would have cut off the claims of Constantine himself to be considered by historians as the head of the Roman empire. It is

The great *fourth* beast, after his *sixth* head was *wounded*, as the people of Europe thought, even unto death, recovered from his wound; and although the western empire was dismembered, and several independent governments were established in its bounds, the throne of Constantinople was still recognized as the superior among the nations of the world.

The troubles of Europe rendered the population of the Latin empire as a *stormy sea;* and thence in the year 606 does the seven-headed *ten-horned beast*, appear to John the Divine, rising up under this sixth head, in the person of the brutal Phocas.

accurately remarked by Archdeacon Woodhouse, that the beast of the xiiith chapter is described as a *leopard*, a *bear*, and a *lion*, in order to show that he had, at the time of his rise from the sea, possession of the three first universal monarchies, and so far was assimilated to the former three beasts of Daniel. In the xviith chapter when the beast is described as bearing the *harlot*, or apostate church of Rome, these characters are omitted. The geography, as well as the history, of nations, is alluded to in the prophecy.

The *wounded head*, in recovering the possession of the ancient capital, on the overthrow of Totila the Goth, appears *healed up to its characteristic despotism* and idolatry. I give the proof of my assertion in the words of the historian of the *Decline and Fall.**

" The eunuch Narses, was chosen to achieve the conquest which had been left imperfect by the first of the Roman generals. Justinian granted to the favourite what he might have denied to the hero: and the preparations were not unworthy of the ancient majesty of the empire. Absolute in the exercise of his authority, more absolute in the affection of his troops, Narses led a numerous and gallant army to Salona, from whence he coasted the Adriatic as far as the confines of Italy.

As soon as Narses had paid his *devotions* to the author of victory, and the *blessed virgin, his peculiar patroness*, he dismissed the Lombards—The inspiration of the virgin revealed to him the day and the word of battle—Justinian, in the year 552, once more receiv-

* Vol. V. page 272—285.

At *this time*,* the *seventh head was not yet come*, and when come, it must continue a *short space*. This consideration excludes the *exarchate of Ravenna* from being the head of the beast. History precludes the idea, that such delegated power should be called the head of the empire. The exarchate was no more than a *lieutenancy*. Such is the declaration of the historian. "After a reign of sixty years, the throne of the Gothic kings was filled by the exarchs of Ravenna, THE REPRESENTATIVES IN PEACE AND WAR OF THE EMPEROR OF THE ROMANS."*

This state of things continued until the western empire, divided as it was under ten crowned horns or independent sovereignties, was effectually united by the bonds of an apostate faith; and felt itself in condition to resist the power of Constantinople. An occasion of trying its strength was afforded during the reign of Leo III. surnamed the Iconoclast, who, from the mountains of Isauria ascended the throne of the east.

"Inspired with a hatred of images, this emperor," said Mr. Gibbon, "proscribed the existence as well as the use of religious pictures; the churches of Constantinople, and the provinces, were cleansed from

ed the *keys* of Rome, which, under his reign had been *five* times taken and recovered. The civil state of Italy after the agitation of a long tempest was fixed by a pragmatic sanction which the emperor promulgated at the *request of the pope*."

It was under this sixth *wounded*, but now *healed*, head, in the reign of Phocas, that John saw the beast arise.

* It is astonishing, that Commentators should so generally have represented the angel, chap. xvii. 10. *the other is not yet come*, as speaking of the time of Domitian, seeing he adds, verse 11; *The beast—is not*. Surely this was not the time of Domitian.

† Hist. Dec. Vol. V. page 284.

idolatry; the images of Christ, the virgin, and the saints, were demolished, or a smooth surface of plaster was spread over the walls of the edifice. With the habit and profession of monks, the public and private worship of images was rigorously prohibited; and it should seem, that a solemn abjuration of idolatry was exacted from the subjects, or at least from the clergy of the eastern empire." The proscriptive edict was extended to the west; "and a strong alternative was proposed to the Roman pontiff. The royal favour, as the price of his compliance, degradation, and exile, as the penalty of disobedience." Animated by the zeal of pope Gregory II. in defence of images, the Italians determined on resistance. The emperor, and all the enemies of idols, were excommunicated by the head of the Latin church; and the exarch of Ravenna lost his life in a popular sedition.

The western empire, uniting in the bonds of idolatry, put an end to the *sixth head;* and afterwards arose the *seventh*, which, according to the prediction, continued but a short time, and then merged in the last head of the beast, styled in prophecy the *eighth, which is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.*

Who, we again, after these historical inductions, ask the question, who is this *seventh head?*

"Ravenna was subdued; and this final conquest extinguished the series of the exarchs who had reigned with a subordinate power since the time of Justinian and the ruin of the Gothic kingdom."

Although the pope was not himself a secular power, his influence among the nations of the western empire was immense. He sought out, and he found, a new head to its dismembered kingdoms.

Gregory had implored the aid of the hero of the age, Charles Martel, who governed the French monarchy; and who by his victory over the Saracens, had saved Europe from the Mahometan yoke. Charles took the Latin church under his protection, espoused the cause of idolatry, and, dignified with the title of patrician, he and his successors, Pepin and Charlemagne, bear up the mother of harlots, and reveal the beast of the sea, under his *seventh* head.

The PATRICIATE is the *seventh head of the beast.* The words of Mr. Gibbon are explicit. Speaking of these powerful leaders, he says, "They would have disdained a *subordinate office:* but the *reign of the Greek emperors was suspended;* and in the VACANCY of the empire, the Roman ambassadors presented these PATRICIANS with the keys of the shrine of St. Peter, as a pledge and a symbol of sovereignty. Except an original and self-inherent claim of sovereignty, there was not any prerogative remaining, which the title of emperor could add to the *patrician* of Rome."

Of this head it was said, Rev. xvii. 10. *When he cometh, he must continue a short space.* Agreeably to the prediction, the event fell out. The PATRICIATE very soon merged in a RENOVATION of the western empire. If we date the rise of this head from the days of Charles Martel, it will have continued only 50 years. Charlemagne possessed the dignity during 26 years, and at the termination of that time, in the year 800, he was crowned emperor of the Romans, and the *patriciate* was no more.*

* Of this fact we have given the history, page 212—215.

It is to the Carlovingian dynasty the Apocalypse refers in chap. xvii. 11. as the eighth who is of the seven. This is justly denominated the *septimo-octave head.* And it is the character of the beast, and by no means, an allusion to the wound of the sixth head, which never did prove mortal, or destroy the existence of the beast, although without a cure it was in its nature mortal, that these words declare—*the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.* Before the division of the Latin empire, the beast *was* one great sovereignty, or consolidated empire, under one despot, since that period, and during the whole of the antichristian 1260 years, he *is not* in this respect, but yet the whole western empire with all its divisions *is* beastly, and so united as notwithstanding its distinct sovereignties, to be considered one family, recognizing some particular power as entitled to the precedency. The beast of the sea of course includes all the nations of the symbolical earth. *The ten horns are ten kingdoms, which receive power cotemporaneously with the beast.* Chap. xvii. 18. *These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast!*

The historian Machiavel, reckons the ten primary kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided as follows: 1. The Ostrogoths in Mesia; 2. The Visigoths in Pannonia; 3. The Sueves and Alans in Gascoigne and Spain; 4. The Vandals in Africa; 5. The Franks in France; 6. The Burgundians in Burgundy; 7. The Heruli in Italy; 8. The Saxons and Angles in Britain; 9. The Huns in Hungary; and, 10. The Lombards on the Danube.

It is objected to this arrangement, that some of these kingdoms had become extinct before the prevalence of the apostacy of the church of Rome, and that the ten horns ought to be looked for among those countries which had then given their support to the papacy. These objections have some force.

However great the authority of Machiavel, and the several expositors who have adopted his arrangement, I had rather leave out the African Vandals, and embrace the German Allemani. I express this opinion both upon geographical and other principles. In the body of the Latin empire we ought to look for the horns: they should be found too at the time of the apostacy: they should not be in the government of a territory which has not generally been connected with the antichristian earth during the 1260 years: but it is not necessary that every one of these governments, which are considered as horns, should actually profess at all times the popish faith.

The empire itself was never very accurately defined within certain geographical boundaries; and no nation of modern times remains unalterably the same as to territory: but yet, the national identity is not considered as destroyed, whensoever a government either cedes or acquires a city or a province.

It is not said that they are the horns of the second beast; but of the first. They belong to the *secular* empire: they give their power to the first beast: and while they afford support to the great antichristian policy of Europe; while they are themselves tyrannical and immoral, those powers which exist in the symbolical earth, whatever may be their speculative

opinions, and their professions in regard to the creed of the Roman Catholics, are entitled to be considered as *horns of the secular beast.*

They were originally, it appears, *ten* in number; and they have almost uniformly kept up the same number. Perfect precision is not necessary in so long a period of time for so very general a history. The changes of nearly 1500 years since the dismemberment of the Roman empire, will have shown sufficiently that the number of the distinct powers have generally been nearer *ten* than to any other.

I now exhibit at one view,

THE BEAST WITH SEVEN HEADS AND TEN HORNS.

The seven *heads*, hills, or forms of government.	The Western, or Latin Roman empire.	The original ten horns or kingdoms.
The 7 hills. 1. The Palatine, 2. Capitoline, 3. Quirinal, 4. Cœlian, 5. Æsquiline, 6. Viminal, 7. Aventine, *The 7 forms of gov't.* 1. Kings, 2. Consuls, 3. Dictators, 4. Decemvirs, 5. Military Tribunes, 6. Emperors, 7. Patricians, becoming as the 7, or 8. Emperors.	Extends from the Mediterranean to the Vistula, and from the Atlantic Ocean and German Sea, to the boundaries of the Greek empire.	1. The Heruli, } In Italy. 2. The Ostrogoths, } In Italy. 3. Lombards, } In Italy. 4. Visigoths, Pannonia. 5. Sueves and Alans, Spain. 6. Franks, France. 7. Burgundians, Burgundy. 8. Saxons and Angles, Britain. 9. Huns, Hungary. 10. Allemani, Germany.

The tyrannical persecuting power of the Roman empire, had under every form, incurred the guilt of blasphemy. Verse 1. *And upon his heads the name of blasphemy.*

The *lion*, the *bear*, and the *leopard*, were the wild beasts most formidable to the ancients;* and in the vision of Daniel, they represented the three universal monarchies which preceded the Roman, viz. the Lion, the Chaldean; the Bear, the Medo-Persian; the Leopard, the Grecian, under Alexander the Great and his successors.† In that vision, the representative of Roman greatness was a *non-descript*. In this vision, he is a monster, in general form resembling the leopard, having the mouth of the lion, and the paw of the bear—swift in its conquests like the Leopard, son of Philip; treading down the nations like the Persian bear; and like the royal lion of Assyria and Chaldea, roaring aloud, and devouring its prey.

To this description is added an account of the *source* of that power which the beast wielded over the empire by his head and horns—Verse 2. the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

We have already shown,‡ that the dragon is the devil, and the civil power of Rome, the agent by which he works. It was foreseen by the author of prophecy, that the tyrannies of the nations would have, even among Christians, their apologists. Ecclesiastical history shows that this is the fact. There

* Hos. xiii. 7, 8.

† Dan. vii. 3—6. ‡ Page 350.

never was a man in power so vile, as not to find a flatterer: no constitution of civil government, however antichristian, has been without its defenders: every *head*, every *horn* of the beast, since the time of Constantine, until the establishment of Napoleon the emperor and king of France and Italy, have found out among the churches, men who prostitute the word of truth to prove that the beast himself, and every such head and horn, is the *vicegerent* of God.*

One plain text puts down all such claims of *divine right*, for any of the heads or horns of the beast. *The dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.*

* Plain Christians are deceived by a trite sophism; and they are the more easily deceived, because the deception is generally convenient to their worldly circumstances. The sophism is this. "There is no power but of God, therefore this power is from heaven; and to it you must submit as unto the ordinance of God." This argument will suit every case; and it has been universally resorted to by the friends of passive obedience. It has always been the refuge of those who plead the divine right of kings, and popes, and emperors, over their unhappy subjects. It applies alike to all power good or bad. It avails Beelzebub the prince, as well as any of his servants or instruments. "Satan is powerful; there is no power but of God; therefore it is wrong to resist the adversary."

This sophism is of easy solution. *There are distinct kinds of power: one is authorized* of God, and is *moral;* the other is *permitted* of God, and is immoral. There are *distinct kinds of obedience. One* is the result of *allegiance*, and is *voluntary:* the *other* the consequence of force, and is *compulsory:* the captive marches to the place of confinement at the command of the conqueror; but still holds his allegiance to his own country. A man must shut his eyes not to see the distinction.

The dragon is the devil: the first beast is the secular Roman empire in its divided state: upon each distinct kingdom, and upon them all collectively, the devil conferred the whole power they possess. Δυναμιν, the force; θρονον, the actual investiture; εξουσιαν, the authority, or national right to reign, are all in this verse said to be from the devil, and not from God. The beast is from God only in the same sense that the dragon is from him.*

Thus armed with diabolical power, the imperial beast whose head, had been wounded in Augustulus, by the ravages of the barbarians, appears recovered from his wound in the person of Justinian, by the victories of the great Belisarius, and the Eunuch Narses—Verse 3. *And all the world wondered after the beast.*

Ὁλη ἡ γη is not, however, all the world of mankind, but the *symbolical earth*—the western empire. Al-

* "The dominion exercised by this beast (the Roman empire) is unjust, tyrannical, oppressive, diabolical. It is not a power legally administered for the good of the subject; for such "power is ordained of God:" but the authority of the beast is founded on another sanction; on that of the dragon, or Satan. When the *legislative and executive powers act from the impulse of worldly and diabolical passions*, this dire usurpation and tyranny will appear But it is *the work of Christianity, by introducing other motives of government*, to repress these enormities, and finally, by the intervention of *heavenly aid, to extirpate* them." *Woodhouse in loco.*

"What *throne* and seat can this be else, that the *devil giveth to the Romans*, but that which he promiseth to give Christ, Matt. iv. 9. to wit, The empire of the world, as being the prince of this world." LORD NAPIER.

"Then the dragon had transferred *his dominion* to the beast, or the *devil had appointed another vicegerent:* and all the world knows that this accords to the history of the Roman empire." SCOTT.

though now erected into several independent kingdoms, they all acknowledged the superiority of the emperor of the east; and, when Phocas proclaimed Boniface the universal bishop, the population of the Latin earth admired the deed, and wondered after the beast: and *they worshipped the dragon and the beast,* verse 4. *saying, who is like unto him, or able to make war on him?* The deluded subject, in doing homage to the civil power, did homage to Satan from whom it emanated; and while held in the chains of a despotic superstition, admired the glory of the oppressor. Slavery degrades poor deluded man.

Verse 5. *There was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies; and power was given to him to continue forty and two months.*

Of the blasphemies of emperors and kings, we shall afterwards speak. It is necessary here, however, to remark, that it is not the *duration* of the secular powers of Europe that is limited in this place, to the well-known period of 42 months, or 1260 days, of prophetic calculation. The word ποιησαι which our translators render in this instance to continue, signifies to *perform,* or to *practise,* and πολεμον ποιησαι, repeatedly employed in this connexion, is to *make war.*

The secular power as *permitted* in the providence of God, is *influenced* by the hierarchy, and empowered by Satan to wage war against religion and the saints for 1260 years. This period settles the chronology of this vision.

* Rev. xi. 7. and xii. 17. and xiii. 7. πολεμον ποιησαι μεϛα των αγιων.

The succeeding verses, from the *sixth* to the *eleventh*, amplifies this idea of the beast. They show the greatness of his blasphemy against God, his ordinances, and his people; his success in persecuting the saints, and the extent of his despotic power; the homage and allegiance which he receives from the people of Christendom, with the exception of those faithful men whose names are in the Lamb's book of life; and announce finally the terrible retribution, which after the faith and patience of the saints has for 1260 years been tried, will cut off by the sword those nations which have employed the sword in an unrighteous cause.*

* A million of the Waldenses perished in France: nine hundred thousand of the orthodox suffered in thirty years after the institution of the Jesuits: the duke of Alva boasted of having put thirty-six thousand to death in the Netherlands by the hands of the common executioner. In thirty years the *inquisition* destroyed one hundred and fifty thousand.

In France, in fifty years, from 1530 to 1580, a million of protestants lost their lives; Charles the IXth, glorying in his letters to the Pope that he had massacred seventy thousand in a few days. At the revocation of the edict of Nantz, by Lewis XIVth, it is computed that one hundred thousand were murdered, and one million banished from their country.

Before the states of Holland established their independence, there were murdered in the reign of Charles V. about fifty thousand, in the succeeding fifteen years about one hundred thousand, and more than half a million fled their country. How many more must have fallen in the war for religion and liberty which they waged, with some intermissions, almost for eighty years.

Besides those who were put to death in the early persecutions of Scotland, Charles II. and James II. involved the protestant throne of England in the blood of the martyrs, and attempted to restore the nation to the communion of the Roman Catholics.

Another agent, the second beast, is also introduced in the vision. To him let us now turn your attention.

II. *The two-horned beast of the earth.*

The description given of this second tyrannical and impious power in the latter part of the chapter, is quite minute and appropriate. Before we proceed to an examination of it, we shall put you in mind of this fact, that the second beast is perfectly distinct from the first, cotemporaneous with him, and his distinguished coadjutor in opposing righteousness on the earth. This fact appears upon reading the testimony before us, verse 11—18: and it immediately suggests the propriety of referring to those parallel passages of the Apocalypse, which speak of the great accomplice of the ten-horned beast. From such a review we derive the idea of the two-horned beast of the Apocalypse, which together

About two thousand of the most eminent ministers in England, and three hundred of the most faithful in Scotland, were driven from their charges, and tortured or murdered. Two hundred thousand families were reduced to poverty; and above sixty thousand in England, and eighteen thousand in Scotland, suffered either banishment or death. *Brown's Church History.*

A calculation of the sufferings inflicted by the secular beast upon the saints over all the nations of Christendom, would astonish the world. Probably not less than fifteen millions of men have lost their lives for their attachment to the truth, and their opposition to heresy, since the rise of Antichrist. Were all the *saints* in Christendom to be slain on the present day, it would not equal the number of the martyrs against the man of sin, who have already *sealed their testimony with their blood.*

with the proof of its correctness, we now lay before you.

The second beast is the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

1. In chap. xi. "The little book" describes a *heathenized church* in league with the beast of the abyss, in persecuting the witnesses: that persecution is cotemporaneous with the *war upon the saints*, described in this chapter; for it is carried on in the same 1260 years of the apostacy. It follows, that as the beast is the same in both cases, the great accomplice is also the same. The two-horned beast is accordingly the church heathenized, under her hierarchy. Should it be objected to this argument, that a *beast*, or *horn*, is the symbol of *secular*, not *ecclesiastical* power, the reply is at hand. When ecclesiastical power becomes tyrannical, it is modelled upon the plan of heathen power, and may justly be represented by the same symbol. Our Lord, in order to destroy in its commencement, all exercise of ecclesiastical ambition, says to his disciples, Matt. xx. 25. *The princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them: but it shall not be so among you.* Whensoever, in despite of this prohibition, an ecclesiastical body assumes heathen power, it becomes BEASTLY, and although it appear like a lamb, its decisions are as *the voice of the dragon*

2. In the xviith chapter, the scarlet beast with the seven heads and ten horns is represented bearing up the mother of harlots, drunken with the blood of the

martyrs. By this chapter it is perfectly obvious, that the Roman Catholic church, that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth, is the coadjutor of the *secular* beast, and corresponds of course, with the *second* beast of the xiiith chapter. The Roman hierarchy is therefore the *beast having two horns like a lamb, and which spake as a dragon.*

3. In the xviiith chapter, the ten-horned beast, with the kings of the symbolical earth and their armies, verse 19, makes war upon the KING OF KINGS, and his army. And when the victory was decided, and the beast taken captive, there appears in his company that distinguished accomplice in crime, who now shares in his punishment. Verse 20. *And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.* Compare these words with chap. xiii. 13, 14. and you will immediately perceive that the work of the *false prophet* is the same with that of the *two-horned beast.* The *false prophet* represents an apostate and treacherous clergy, the antichristian priesthood, and so of course must the *second* beast.

4. In the viith chapter of Daniel, the *fourth beast,* the symbol of the Roman empire, appears with his *ten horns.* But a distinct power also rises up among the ten horns; and, before this new power, three of the horns were destroyed. It is called, verse 8, *another little horn,* distinguishing it from the secular

kingdoms of the Latin empire. *And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things:* verse 20. *Whose look was more stout than his fellows.* 21. *The same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them.* 25. *And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand, until a time, and times, and the dividing of time.*

The expression of the prophet, *time, times, and the dividing of time,* three years and a half, being the same period with the 42 months, or 1260 symbolical days, determines the chronology of this singular power, distinct from the secular or ten-horned beast. The words, *The saints of the Most High shall be given into his hand,* point out the decree of the emperor Phocas, subjecting the Christian church to the domination of Roman ambition, in the year 606, and so determine the commencement of the 1260 years. The *rising* up of this horn, among the several kingdoms of the dismembered Roman empire, distinct from them all, determines the application of the symbol to that ecclesiastical usurpation which was established in the ancient seat of empire, after the erection of these several kingdoms. The overthrow of three horns or kingdoms in the presence of this new power, in order to prepare the way for its further exaltation, as it is a part of the prediction, has become a matter of history. The spirit of ambition, natural to depraved man, and peculiarly restless in ecclesiastical men, who are not sanctified by

divine grace, had found in the city of Rome the means of nourishment and growth.

The pretentions of diocesan episcopacy, always extravagant, were cherished by the first Christian emperors, who in fact established an ecclesiastical empire upon the model of the secular, reserving to themselves the right of supremacy. The bishop of Rome soon *claimed* the pre-eminence among the clergy, but found a formidable rival in the bishop of Constantinople. Over the western churches he had exercised a species of supremacy, however, long before the above-mentioned decree was passed, which put the *saints* under his power, and from which of course must be dated the 1260 years of his reign over them. The saints indeed never acknowledged him: force alone put *them* under his hand. It is not his own claims, nor the admission of others, but the edict of the emperor, that gave him power over the faithful followers of the Redeemer. And yet, though this edict, from which we date the time, was passed in the year 606, it was not until the tenth century that the papal power had reached its highest point of elevation. Until that period, this *little horn* was always *rising up among the horns* of the nations.

In the first stages of its progress, and before it could obtain the ample revenue and the political influence which the possession of the ecclesiastical states of Italy carried along with it, the three kingdoms, which had been previously established in that territory, were overthrown. 1. The kingdom of the Heruli; 2. The kingdom of the Ostrogoths; 3. The

kingdom of the Lombards; these three horns were plucked up by the roots, and upon their disappearance, the little horn, or the power of the head of the Latin churches, became conspicuous.

This little horn, distinct from the ten-horned beast, but acting as his coadjutor in opposing the interests of true religion, occupies precisely the place in the prophecies of Daniel, which is assigned to the two-horned beast, and to the false prophet, and to the heathen and harlot church, in the Apocalyptical predictions.

From its sameness with the little horn, we argue that the *second beast* is the symbol of the ecclesiastical empire, with the Roman pontiff at its head. The description given in our text, perfectly according with this application, will furnish additional proof of its correctness.

Verse 11. *And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.*

The *earth* is the western empire: and a BEAST is the symbol of a universal, tyrannical, and immoral power. This beast is, of course, an ecclesiastical empire, distinct from the civil, and within the same bounds. The *papists* themselves, in claiming the title, *Roman Catholic,* proclaim their church to be this very beast—a universal empire, distinct from the secular, and occupying the same ground.

Horns are distinct powers. The *two horns* of this beast are like those of a *lamb,* professing to be Christian, having a show of spirituality, and claiming authority under Messiah, as his ordinance. The

beast, indeed, professes to be a lamb; but is in reality a wild beast, θηριον, that instead of preaching the gospel, and speaking comfortably to Jerusalem, speaks great swelling words of blasphemy and cruelty, like the dragon. The doctrine of the church of Rome is diabolical.

The power of the hierarchy is twofold. *There were two horns like a lamb*—two distinct and regularly organized ecclesiastical powers. These are the two distinct bodies of ecclesiastics, called the *regular* and *secular* clergy. 1. The regular, comprehending all the monastic orders. 2. The secular, comprehending all the parochial clergy.

These two bodies were perfectly distinct from each other, having each its own officers and regulations.

Verse 12. *He exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him.* "With his prelates and his monks, he directs the administration of civil power. The names of Wolsey, Ximenes, Richlieu, and Mazarine, are handed down to posterity as the most intriguing and ambitious of statesmen."* "He holdeth imperium in imperio, an empire within an empire; hath not only the principal direction of the temporal powers, but often engageth them in his service, and enforceth his canons and decrees with the sword of the civil magistrate."†

He causeth the earth, and all that dwell therein, to worship the first beast. The western world, and its inhabitants, are reduced by the machinations of a temporizing priesthood, to yield blind submission to

* Faber. † Bishop Newton.

the civil power, however impious and tyrannical. The Spirit of liberty and independence, which characterized the invaders of ancient Rome, is broken down by the efforts of the antichristian church, and the doctrine of passive obedience, is inculcated from the several pulpits of oppressed Europe.*

The imperial power re-established over Rome, in consequence of the victories of Narses, is supported by the church, but it is when this once wounded head appears in the person of Phocas, that Gregory the Roman pontiff, sets the example of *worshipping* the beast, which his successors in the papal church followed themselves in the exaltation of Charle-

* "He confirms and maintains the sovereignty and dominion of the first beast over his subjects. He *supports tyranny*, as he is by tyranny supported." These words indicate the sentiments of the bishop of Norwich, for which Mr. Faber, as the apologist of passive obedience, calls him to task. We, however, who, like Newton, and Mr. Whiston, esteem the doctrine of subjection to tyranny, as neither honourable nor innocent in rational creatures, and especially in those who have the light of divine revelation, consider it criminal, notwithstanding the criticism of Mr. Faber, to *worship with that civil homage* which is due to the ordinance of God, the beast who received from the dragon, the *devil*, all the authority with which he is invested. When compulsion is applied, it alters the case. Involuntary obedience is quite a different thing. A patient submission to irremediable evil, or a peaceable conformity to the common and legitimate order of society, is a duty which Christians can practise without worshipping either the beast or his image: but, in reality, we know not what idea to attach to the term *worship*, as applied to the civil government, unless it be what bishop Newton and Mr. Whiston allege, a slavish submission to diabolical authority. We regret, that even in England, such a writer as Mr. Faber should be found in the present day, to come forth as the apologist of the degrading doctrine of *passive obedience.*

magne, and still more forcibly urged afterwards upon others throughout the whole empire.

Verse 13. represents the ecclesiastical beast employed in what has passed among the Roman Catholics, as a *note* of the true church, performing miracles—"lying wonders, with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." The 14th verse continues the same idea, and introduces into the description of the ecclesiastical beast, other objects to which we promised a distinct attention.

III. *The image of the beast, together with his mark, his name, and the number of his name.*

Of these objects, we shall speak in order.

1. The IMAGE of the beast. Verses 14, 15.—*Saying to them that dwell on the earth, That they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.*

This *image* is the *papacy*. The pope of Rome is the most striking representation of the old Roman emperors, that can be conceived of by the imagination of man. "He is the common centre and cement, which unites all the distinct kingdoms of the empire; and by joining with them, procures them a blind obedience from their subjects."* "He is the

* Whiston.

principle of unity to the ten kingdoms of the beast, and causeth, as far as he is able, all who will not acknowledge his supremacy, to be put to death. In short, he is the most perfect likeness and resemblance of the ancient Roman emperors; is as great a tyrant in the Christian world as they were in the heathen world; presides in the same city, usurps the same powers; affects the same titles; and requires the same universal homage and adoration. So that this prophecy descends more and more into particulars, from the *Roman state*, or *ten kingdoms in general*, to the *Roman church or clergy*, in particular, and still more particularly to the *person of the pope*."*

Mr. Faber differs from his celebrated predecessor upon this subject; but without a cause. He considers this image literally, as the images worshipped by the Roman Catholics. His principal argument is, that an image *to* the beast, is not an image *of* him. But in this case, the image is both *unto* and *of* the beast. It is called the image *of* the beast, and *his* image or representation, nine different times.†

According to this mode of exposition, there is no confusion in the predictions. The empire, the church, and the papacy, although all united in one terrible and impious apostacy, are perfectly distinguishable from one another. Every part of the text, and indeed every passage in which the image

* Bishop Newton.

† See Rev. xiii. 15. xiv. 9, 11. xv. 2. xvi. 2. xix. 20. and xx. 4.

of the beast appears, corresponds perfectly with this application of the symbol. The *pope*, is the *creature* of the church, or second beast, as well as the resemblance of the emperor, or first beast. The second beast caused him to be made and worshipped. In the medals of Martin V. "two cardinals are represented crowning the pope, and two kneeling before him, with this inscription, *quem creant adorant*, whom they create, they adore."*

In support of this interpretation, and in refutation of Mr. Faber's opinion, I offer the following arguments.

1. In the vision of John the Divine, we are not to consider one part of the representation as literal, while the other part of the hieroglyphic is understood metaphorically: and as the *beast* is not to be understood literally, the *image* is neither a picture nor a statue.

2. The images which the Roman Catholics worship, are pictures or representations of several objects; God, angels, Christ, the virgin Mary, and innumerable saints, &c. &c. but this image is that of the beast, or the Roman emperor.

3. The idols of the popish churches are dead inanimate objects; but this image is quite a different personage—having life, speech, and action.

4. Literal images never persecute those who neglect either themselves or others: but this image

* Bishop Newton.

causes to be put to death, by delivering over to the sword of the magistrate, *as many as would not worship him.*

We shall now inquire,

2. What is the *mark* of the beast?

Verses 16, 17. *And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark.*

Of this *mark,* the following things are affirmed in the text, and the parallel passages of the Apocalypse. 1. It is the mark of the *first* or *ten-horned* beast, the civil Latin empire, chap. xix. 20. *the mark of the beast,* τὸ χαραγμα τȣ θηρȣ: and in this verse, the *first* beast is distinguished from the hierarchy which is called the false prophet; it is also the mark of his name, xiv. 11. 2. The χαραγμα, or mark of the secular power, is *imposed* by the false prophet, or second beast; it is he who had the *two horns like a lamb, and spake as a dragon,* that both gives life to the image, and imposes the mark—*caused to be received.* 3. It is imposed upon all discription of people throughout the Roman empire, except the saints and martyrs. Chap. xx. 4. *That were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark.* 4. It is *differently* imposed,—on the *foreheads of some,* and on the *hand of others, the right hand.* 5. It is the effect of "strong

delusion" to receive this mark. Chap. xix. 20. *The false prophet deceived them that had the mark of the beast.* 6. It nevertheless secures their worldly interests throughout the empire: *no man might buy or sell save he that had the mark.* 7. This *badge* or χαραγμα, while it secures secular advantages, subjects the possessor to the plagues of the vials, chap. xv. 2. And 8thly, This mark devotes to destruction. Chap. xiv. 11. *And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*

Grotius and Spencer,* with their wonted industry and erudition, have furnished the means of explaining this symbol by the customs of antiquity. The slave received the mark of his master; the soldier of his general; and the devotee of his idol: these marks, impressed on the hand or the forehead, consisted of the name at length, or the initials of the name; of some cipher which had a definite conventional signification; or of certain hieroglyphics generally understood. Thus, he who imposed the mark, declared his property; and they who received it, avowed their submission and their determination to serve.

The *mark in the forehead,* is *avowed subjection* to the complex and impious power of the nations, in all cases civil and ecclesiastical, to the full extent of their tyrannical claims; and *that in the hand* denotes *activity, in supporting these thrones of iniquity,*

* Spen. de leg. Heb. lib. ii. Cap. 20. Sect. 1—4.

whether with or without the profession of the Roman Catholic creed, or any other heresy whatsoever.

This blind subjection to the corrupt systems of civil order, which in despite of the light of revelation, has so long cursed Christendom, unites all the characters connected with the mark of the beast in the sacred text, in a much higher degree, than the sprinkling of holy water, the application of the sign of the cross, or any other of the superstitious and contemptible fooleries of the church of Rome.

Support to the secular power, urged by the ecclesiastical, upon all descriptions of men, avowed and acted upon, under the influence of delusion, and for the sake of temporal gain, while it involves an admission of those antichristian principles which oppose the rights of God and man, and which tend to perpetuate the unholy despotism of the European nations, cannot but be criminal in the sight of the moral Governor of the world, and must expose to punishment all upon whose heads its guilt doth rest. This, and not any sensible sign, such as the *cross in baptism*, is the mark of the beast.*

* "We are not to imagine that any external mark was to be impressed on any part of the bodies of the votaries of Rome: but only that they should be known to be the votaries of Rome, by certain traits in their character." JOHNSTON.

"This mark of the Latin empire, the Roman beast is nothing else, but that professed servitude, obedience, confederacy, or concurrence, which the subjects thereof have avouched."

LORD NAPIER.

This author, in a very ingenious Dissertation, endeavours to prove that the sign of the cross became afterwards the mark of the first beast, or Roman empire, and that it was derived, not from the cross

It remains for us now to ascertain,

3. The *name* of the beast.

At the reformation, the papal power was naturally the object of dislike and reprobation; and nothing could be more effectual in justifying the conduct of the protestants, than to establish a belief that popery was the spiritual monster from which Christians were enjoined to separate themselves. It was upon this principle, that in their zeal to purify the church, our reformers fell into the habit of applying promiscuously the predictions of the great apostacy to the pope, as the acknowledged head of the Catholic church. The names, *beast* and *antichrist*, were accordingly applied to him. The friends of the prevailing superstition, endeavoured to parry the blow, and to discover others to whom some parts of the scriptural predictions might be applied. This produced many curious and absurd expositions of the *name*, and the *number* of the name, pointed out in the following passage.

Verse 18. *Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast; for it is the*

of Christ, but from the *name* of the beast Lateinos. Mr. Faber too adopts this opinion, and with an awkward apology for the use of *the sign of the cross* by the church of England, he declares it to be the *mark* of the beast.

I admit it to be a mark of superstition. I admit it to be a badge of antichristian delusion; but certainly a cross is not the representative of Latinus, confessedly the name of the beast: and yet the Apocalyptical mark is the mark both of the secular empire and of the name, chap. xiv. 11.

number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six.

Since the power of the church of Rome has ceased to fill the world with terror; and Satan carries on his hostility to the cause of religion by other weapons, such as the *flood* of heresy and infidelity with which he hoped to *carry away the mystic woman*, men have amused themselves, and have gratified their personal animosities, and their political prejudices, by applications of this text to the various characters which were to them peculiarly obnoxious.

The apologists of Rome, the irreligious class of protestant writers, the Commentators of a mere political creed, and the undiscerning among the orthodox and pious, have so multiplied interpretations, as to confound where they ought to enlighten.

The number 666, has been discovered in the names, Ulpius, Trajanus, Dioclesian, Julian the apostate, Luther, Evanthas, Latinus, Titan, Lampelis, Niketis, Kakos, Hodegos, Arnoumai, Romiit, our holy father the pope; and even in the sacred names of the Most High God.* Mahomet, Louis XIV. Cromwell, king George III. Napoleon, &c. &c. have all thus been numbered.

To avoid, as they supposed, such confusion and uncertainty, several excellent expositors have endeavoured to apply the scriptural number 666, not to distinguish a name; but to ascertain dates; and by adding this sum to the time of the apostle John's banishment in Patmos, fancied that they had accu-

* Calmet.

rately discovered the commencement of the great period of 1260 years.

Others again, instead of rendering the χξς of this text numerically, have taken the liberty of considering them as the initials of certain words. Χριστος ξυλον σαυρος, Christ, wood, cross; using further license with these Greek letters, they have been made to represent the number 1066; and thus by a *double entendre*, by referring to the *wood of the cross of Christ*, to the pontificate of Urban II. the text has been applied to the age of the *Crusades*.

The words, however, of this passage are, when duly considered, too pointed to give any sanction whatever to such sporting with the mystic number 666.

It was a method practised among the ancients, to denote names by numbers; and the author of Revelation accommodates his expressions to the well-known customs of the age.* In this case the following considerations restrict the application of the number to its proper object, and serve to ascertain the name of the beast.

1st. It is the *proper name* of the *first* beast or secular empire. Chap. xiv. 11. The *mark* and the *name* respect the same beast. 2. It is the *common name* of all those who belong to the empire. Chap. xiii. 17. 3. It is the *proper name* of a certain man. 4. It contains the number 666. All these four marks meet in one word, and in one word only:

* The river *Nile*, Νειλος, was counted holy, as containing 365; Theuth, or Mercury, was designated by 1218; Jupiter by 737; the Sun by 608. See Daubuz, Selden, Napier, Lowman, Newton.

that word *must* be the name of the beast. LATINUS is the proper name of the western Roman empire. In distinguishing it from the Greek it is called the *Latin* empire: The same name applies to the whole population, "the Latins:" It is the name of an individual man; Latinus, the ancient king of Latium and the *founder* of the empire: And this *name* contains the *number* specified. In order to calculate the number, we must evidently employ the language of the New Testament—The name in Greek is LATEINOS.

Λ	30
Α	1
Τ	300
Ε	5
Ι	10
Ν	50
Ο	70
Σ	200
Λατεινος	666

I know it has been alleged, that this calculation finds it necessary to supply a letter in the name Latinus, more than obtains in the common othography; and I readily admit, that in our Greek books, when the word occurs, it is without an epsilon, ΛΑΤΙΝΟΣ. This objection could be made only by a Greek scholar; but a good Greek scholar will never attach any importance to it: for the ancient orthography, both Latin and Greek, is *Lateinos*. The

celebrated Irenæus, who studied the sacred oracles under the direction of Polycarp, one of the disciples of the apostle John, and who had conversed with many who had seen face to face the writer of this prophecy, gives this interpretation, confirming the reading of the word with an *epsilon*, by the authority of the ancient manuscripts. In the matter of fact, he could not be mistaken; and whatever we think of his commentary, his evidence as to the orthography of *Lateinos* is conclusive.

It is not a strange thing in any language, to meet with alterations in the spelling of a word; and it is but reasonable to expect, that in any case of importance, that orthography which is in actual use at the time, or which, if going into disuse, is most agreeable to analogy, should be the one adopted by a judicious author. We infer of course, that the author of the Apocalypse, if he at all referred to Lateinos, would consider it as having the letter ε; because this is both agreeable to the analogy of Latin proper names having the long *i*, when rendered into the Greek; and it is the matter of fact that the ancients used the diphthong ει, in writing it. The testimony of *Irenæus* is evidence of the fact; and the name Longinus proves the analogy. By the old Greek writers it was Λονγεινος; by the more recent, the ε is dropped.*

* One of the first scholars of the age, who adds to a very extensive acquaintance with the sciences, physical and moral, a rich fund of Oriental literature, and particular familiarity with the Greek language, the Rev. Mr. Wylie, of *Philadelphia*, wrote to me, at the time this subject was under consideration, as follows:

This name being ascertained, it settles beyond all controversy, what is the object of the several predictions relative to the beast of the Apocalypse. It demonstrates that object to be the state of society, as it respects the Christian religion, in the west of Europe, until the era of the millennium.

CONCLUSION.

It was foreseen that this portion of the civilized world, should be for ages the most interesting and the most important to man in general, and unto Christians particularly; therefore are its concerns put upon the records of prophetic history with more

"I have not, in the course of my reading, discovered any instance of the *Latin* word Latinus being spelled *diphthongally* in Greek. It is a matter of fact, that Polybius frequently spells it simply with *Iota*. The Latin writers themselves, however, used the *long i*, and the diphthong *ei*, often indiscriminately. Omnis or omneis, belli or bellei, virtuti or virtutei, libertati or libertatei, &c. &c.

"The analogy of numberless words will support the version of the Roman *i* into the Greek ει. Irenæus himself has for his initial the diphthong ει. The Latin words Idea, Alcides, Clitus, *et eodem genere sexcenta alia*, might be mentioned: but what is still more in point, Sabinus, Antoninus, Longinus, are spelled in Greek with the diphthong. Montfauc. Pal. Par. Ed. p. 162, 163, *Longinus* moreover is now, as well as *Latinus*, written in Greek with *iota* alone. Let any one who feels scrupulous upon this point, consult some of the Greek writings of the eighth or ninth centuries, and he will find numberless instances of a similar description. Vide Montf. lib. iii. p. 236 and 237. where, after speaking of the frequent interchange of vowels and diphthongs, we have the following words; *quid mirum si Latinus scriba dicat* γειωσκει *pro* γιωσκει."

copiousness and precision, than are those of any other part of the human family.

The *Latin earth* is the scene of prediction: the *Latin empire,* with its several kingdoms, constitute the seven-headed ten-horned beast: the *Latin church* is the grand apostacy which corrupts religion; and the *Latin system of social order,* civil and ecclesiastic, is peculiarly diabolical, and is to be punished, and ultimately destroyed, by the vials of the wrath of God.

It is not then as a matter of curiosity, that we endeavour to ascertain the name, and the number of the name of the first beast. It is of importance in understanding the predictions, to define the countries which are to be affected by the judgments. Certain as we are from the inspired oracles, that the kingdoms of the Latin world, whatever changes they undergo, do not become, until the 1260 years are expired, the kingdoms of our Lord, we still include under the character of horns of the beast, the several nations of western Europe, not excepting those which are called protestant.

If modern Europe could be supposed to furnish an exception, it would be in reference to the British empire, where is to be found the most pure and active part of the church of God: but the text admits of no exception within the bounds of the Latin earth; and we shall afterwards furnish a full demonstration of the fact, that the British government is, notwithstanding its secession from the communion of the *church* of Rome, still a part of the secular empire, and a horn of the first beast, deriving like

the other powers of the nations, its authority from the dragon.

It would not be surprising, indeed, were the Roman Catholic system of religion to be hereafter introduced to power among the various nations that espoused the protestant cause at the reformation. "An insidious liberality of sentiment, which confounds the eternal distinctions of truth and falsehood, has affected protestants. They no longer view with abhorrence, the blasphemy and idolatry of the papal hierarchy; but consider them trifling errors—mere venial mistakes. Their profession is a mere name, and their external adherence to it, the effect of habit and education. Their indifference to the discriminating tenets of their religion, predisposes them to yield readily to the arts and designs of the Catholics.

"Unhappily, they (the Catholics) have been hitherto but too successful: for they have evidently gained ground in the last and present century, notwithstanding the abridgment of the pope's temporal authority. Many princes, of families which were once eminent in their attachment to the reformation, have apostatized: and states by right of succession have fallen into the hands of Catholics. In Germany and in Holland, the faith of many protestants has been unhinged by artifice and sophistry, so that they have fallen into the embraces of the Roman church. In Great Britain, the Catholics are striving to become eligible by law, to the high offices of state, and to places of importance in the army and navy.—Their emancipation, as it is improperly called, will, I ap-

prehend, be the death-blow to the protestant interest in Britain.—The fall of Britain, as a protestant state, will, perhaps, afford the true explanation to the slaying of the witnesses.

"The success of the Catholics in Germany, and other places, is chiefly owing to the Jesuits. They are countenanced in Austria, and have the direction of the schools there. In the Palatinate, especially the Dutchy of Juliers and Bergs, they are favourably received. In Bavaria, they have amazing influence. In Sweden and Denmark, they have many adherents. In West Russia, they have a religious establishment of their own."*

We turn away from the further contemplation of this painful picture of the religious state of modern Europe. In the succeeding Lecture I shall call your attention to a more agreeable object, and give a rapid sketch of the history of the true church during the well-known period, time, times, and the dividing of time. To that company let our affections be directed, that with them we may *sing the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb.* AMEN.

* Dr. Romeyn's Fast Sermons. Albany, 1808.

THE

CHARACTER AND HISTORY

OF

TRUE CHRISTIANS

DURING THE GENERAL APOSTACY.

LECTURE XIII.

Rev. xiv. 1—13....*And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads,* &c. &c.

JOHN the apostle, like the son of Zacharias, of the same name, points out to those who look for him, the Saviour which is Christ the Lord. "Behold," said the Baptist, at the bank of Jordan, "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world!" "And I looked," said the son of Zebedee, during the great apostacy from Christianity, which affected all the nations, "and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion."

Employing the language of these two great and distinguished ministers of the church, we now address you, unto whom the Saviour is precious; we direct your eyes to the same personage, still occu-

pying the same place, still retaining the same character, and still dispensing pardon and felicity.

Lo, brethren, standing before you, God-man, your friend and your brother, as the Head of his own church. He is more than any human philanthropist. "This is no vain theorist, coldly speculating upon imaginary schemes of improvement, bewildering his disciples with the peradventures of doubtful disputation, or indolently suggesting impracticable plans of reform." He whom we preach is alive to your wants and your woes; he is ever awake and in action, doing good and diffusing happiness.

Along with him is a *sealed company* of men, devoted to his cause, animated by his Spirit, called, and chosen, and faithful. The angels of the upper sanctuary, minister to them in obedience to his command; and their own *messengers*, by his appointment, preach the everlasting gospel, and proclaim in their hearing the downfal of their foes.

The plan which I purpose to pursue in this Lecture is, *To settle the chronology of the chapter—Give the history of its contents*—and *make application.*

I. *Ascertain the time to which the prophecy of the fourteenth chapter has reference.*

This chapter describes the EIGHTH VISION of John the Divine, and is evidently intended to relieve Christian anxiety, excited by the alarming representation of the SEVENTH VISION, recorded in the preceding chapter. There, we had a developement of the antichristian system, as it respects the two

great and distinct kinds of human society, *civil and ecclesiastic*, within the bounds of the *Latin world.* We have seen our fellow-men, degraded throughout the different nations, by the united powers of the *first* and the *second beast*, into a state of slavish subjection to tyranny and superstition: and so made to suffer for the crime of bearing the *mark of the beast*, and of his *name;* a crime in which the people must share with their superiors, both despotic princes and corrupted priests; inasmuch as they have the power at will to remedy the evil. Had not the *people* consented to give their power to the *kings of the earth*, the kings could not have with one mind *given their power unto the beast.*

Here, we have an account of true Christians who disapproved of the prevailing policy, and who, although unknown to one another on earth, and without any concert or plan of co-operation, are united by their living Redeemer, into one holy assembly, interesting to behold. From the nature of the contrast of the *sealed servants* of God in this chapter, with the *marked slaves* of the beast in the preceding, we are led to conclude that the two visions have respect to the same space of time.

This idea has occurred to every judicious expositor of the Revelation; and has induced almost all Commentators to apply this chapter to events which come to pass during some part of the period of the beast's reign. We apply the predictions so as to run parallel with the history of the apostacy, during the whole remarkable period of the 1260 years. The text itself furnishes the means of ascertaining its

chronology, and justifies our application of it to the time specified.

The *harvest* and the *vintage* with which the xivth chapter closes, obviously describe the concluding judgments of heaven upon the antichristian foe. Gathering in the corn, and making the wine, is the *end* of the husbandman's labours; and so the harvest and the vintage conclude the season under consideration, whether it be a time of wrath or of mercy. In this connexion, these symbols must be understood as indicating the wrath of God, denounced by the several *angels* upon the *symbolical Babylon;* and they must of course be explained of the *concluding judgments,* at the close of the period already pointed out—*the time of the end.*

The commencement of the vision cannot be dated at any time subsequent to the rise of the man of sin; for it expressly refers to an event which took place after the revolution in the Roman empire, from Paganism to the profession of Christianity. The company of 144,000, who stand with the Lamb on mount Sion, having their Father's name written in their foreheads, were thus marked out after the *sixth seal,* and before the opening of the *seventh,* that is, some time between the accession of Constantine to the throne of Rome, and the reign of the Great Theodosius. In the seventh chapter of the Revelation, we have a description of the sealing of 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, and these constitute the body of pious men who are introduced to view in the first verse of the fourteenth chapter.

The idea of *sealing* the servants of God is taken from Ezek. ix. 4. *Go through the midst of the city,*

through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. The operation of *marking* the saints was as necessary in the 4th century, as it was in the age of Ezekiel. "The number of immoral and unworthy Christians began so to increase, that the examples of real piety and virtue became extremely rare.

"When the terrors of persecution were totally dispelled; when the church, secured from the efforts of its enemies, enjoyed the sweets of prosperity and peace; when the most of the bishops exhibited to their flock the contagious examples of arrogance, luxury, effeminacy, animosity, and strife, with other vices too numerous to mention, then it was no wonder that the church was contaminated with shoals of profligate Christians, and that the *virtuous few* were in a manner *oppressed and overwhelmed* with the superior numbers of the *wicked and licentious.*"*

The 144,000 which were sealed in this age of corruption, are introduced at the beginning of the xivth chapter, and hence we infer, that the prophecy ought to be applied to the early, as well as to the more recent, ages of the antichristian apostacy.

Presented in *vision* as they are, for the purpose of assuring us that the church shall not be destroyed; and that in the most dissolute age there shall be saints, it was necessary that this hope should be cherished from the very origin of the prevailing evil. Therefore, do we conclude, that this

* Mosh. Vol. I. page 372. Phil. 1797.

chapter gives us the history of the saints, from the beginning to the end of the 1260 years.

II. *The contents of the fourteenth chapter.*

The general division of this chapter is into three parts, each of which admits of subdivision. We are furnished with a *description of true Christians*—with a history of *the principal revivals* among them—and with an account of the *total overthrow of their enemies.*

We shall direct your attention to each of these in the order in which they occur.

Description of the saints during the apostacy.

Verse 1—5. *And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And*

in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

The mountain Sion is the true Christian church. A mountain, in the symbolical style, is the seat of power, either civil or religious, good or bad. Babylon, though situated low on the banks of the river, is called the *destroying mountain;* and the triumphs of Christianity over all the nations, is denoted by the phrase, the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established over the tops of the mountains. On a mountain stood the temple of the Lord, and therefore does it denote his place of residence among his people. *In Sion is his seat.* This expression denotes the dignity, the beauty, and the stability of Christianity. *Ye are come unto mount Zion.*

There *stands the Lamb.* Messiah appears to his church as the victim for our sins: for we desire to know nothing but Christ crucified. He is a priest upon his throne. He that liveth and was dead, stands at the head of his saints; and protects them from the *wild beast* having the horns of a lamb and the voice of a dragon.

And with him, in both a spiritual union and a happy fellowship, are 144,000 Israelites without guile. This expression denotes all his saints, during the apostacy. His open *witnesses* are few; but these are comparatively numerous. Scattered over the nations and among the several churches, however great their imperfection, they are all upon the foundation, and stand in Sion along with their Redeemer. They are thus preserved from the temptations and the power of the *dragon.*

The celestial song, in which their voices are united, is peculiar to themselves. Its notes are listened to attentively by the enraptured prophet. Amidst the intervals of the roaring of the *beasts* of prey, he hears the music of the harp. Deep, solemn, and awful, its sound, like that of the rapid torrents of the hills or loud peals of distant thunder, bursts upon our ears. This new song of redeemed men is sung with transports of joy before the throne of Jehovah, and in the presence of the ministers and elders of the church,—*the four beasts, and the elders.**

No man could learn that song, but the ransomed of the Lord. The melody of the heart is peculiar to the saints. They alone have a new heart and a right spirit. With *their joy a stranger doth not intermeddle.*

These are the members of the *invisible church,* united as one company to the Redeemer; although not all united in any *one visible communion.* They are found in the several churches—in all the twelve tribes of Israel; and yet are only a part of these several churches.

There is no visible ecclesiastical body, without false professors; and pious men may be found in very corrupt communities. This results from the nature of human association. It is the part of a *few* only, of those who are connected with any extensive society, either civil or religious, to comprehend the schemes and the principles of its leading members. The multitude are incapable of sifting the motives of the managers, or of cal-

* The four living creatures. See page 55.

culating the consequences of their proceedings. Wise and virtuous men find it often impossible to make many, who co-operate with them, understand the whole of their views, or of the means which they see cause to employ: and it would, in several important concerns, be imprudent to disclose to the public all they know; because such developement might effectually prevent the accomplishment of their benevolent designs.

The ambitious, the mercenary, and the deceitful, take advantage of the state of human society, and succeed in imposing upon the pious, the peaceable, and the unsuspecting part of the community, while they give an entirely wrong direction to the general movements of the collective body.

Thus, there may be a majority of virtuous members in a rapidly declining church; and these are not usually awakened, either to suspicion or to action, until the evil is beyond the reach of remedy. It remains for the saints, in a church reduced to such a state as this, only to bear with patience the affliction for which they mourn, or by a powerful effort to tear asunder the innumerable and the strong ligaments by which they are bound, even to corrupt establishments. Such an experiment is always painful, and often dangerous. These considerations, coming in aid of the natural indolence of man, prevent a frequent recurrence to it, except in those instances, in which strong passions are excited by some other cause; and the schisms produced under the influence of violent passions, do more injury than honour to the Christian religion. Amidst the various contentions and divisions which have from

age to age agitated and distracted the church, passion has had more to do than principle, pride has been more exercised than conscience, and prejudice has been consulted more than argument. Rarely, indeed, do men break off from their ecclesiastical connexions, from correct principles, and with a view to act as faithful witnesses for God. The few cases of this description which occur, make little noise in the world: and by far the greater part of the pious people are scattered here and there among the churches of the nations. "They are not confined to one place, or to one party; they are not visible as a society distinct from nominal Christians."* These comparatively *hidden*, but genuine disciples, are in number to the open and bold *witnesses* against the corruptions of the man of sin, as the 144,000 to *two*, or as the 7000 Israelites *who did not bow the knee to Baal*, to the prophets Elijah and Elisha.

There are, however, certain *traits of character*, peculiar to all pious men; and to these, as pointed out in this text, I solicit your attention. In giving the evidences of a state of grace, we have great need of discrimination. Success in such an undertaking does not depend upon the multiplicity of tests applied to the conscience, so much as upon the precision of our exhibitions. One unequivocal sign is sufficient to settle the question; because *where* there is one saving grace, *there* is the spiritual life which shall in due time grow up into perfection. As one unpardoned sin condemns for ever, let the character

* Fraser's Key.

be otherwise what it may, so one gracious exercise is certain evidence of the *new-birth*, that unequivocal gift of Christ our Redeemer and Saviour. The Son of God neither condemns nor justifies by halves. Let the advocates of an *atonement* which does *not expiate*, or of an *expiation* which does *not redeem*, or of a *redemption* which does *not save the soul*, amuse themselves in tearing asunder the seamless robe of the mediatory righteousness; the scriptures still teach, that *he who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up to the death for us all, will with him also freely give us all things.*

Those which were *redeemed from the earth, redeemed from among men,** according to this text, have the following

Four characteristics of true godliness.

1. *Union by* FAITH *to the Redeemer*, together with a profession of allegiance to the Lord. The 144,000 are "*with* the Lamb on mount Sion, having his Father's name written in their foreheads." They are in the church; they bear the mark of their God, as his peculiar property, and they avow their obedience to him. Their highest privilege, and their distinguishing blessing, is to be *with* him as their living Head, who, as the Lamb without spot, made atonement for them. *Faith forms this union* with the Sa-

* Verse 3. οἱ ἠγορασμενοι. Verse 4. ὗτοι ἠγορασθησαν. They were *bought*. Purchase implies both *contract* and *price paid*. The price is the *blood of the covenant*. The covenant determines the extent of the purchase, and of course *defines the atonement*. Without a covenant, sufferings could not make atonement.

viour. Two distinct intelligent beings cannot unite without a mutual giving and receiving of the one to the other. The Son of God is *given* that we may *receive* him. Faith "receives and rests upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel." It appropriates the Saviour to the person, and for the salvation of the convinced sinner.*

Faith is the FIRST of the Christian GRACES. A NOVICE may err in arrangement; but Christian experience gives to faith the first place. *We live by faith, we walk by faith. He that believeth not is condemned.*

* The term *appropriation* has been disputed. To *appropriate*, say the English Dictionaries, is, "to *consign to some particular person or use.*" The opposition to the appropriation of faith proceeds from ignorance of English, or from heresy and impiety. By *receiving* the offered Saviour, I make that *my own* which was not my own before. *Not* to appropriate, is *not* to make the Saviour mine. It is to reject him. It is unbelief. An *unappropriating faith*, term it as you will, is the *faith of devils.* The man who has it, whatever may be his pretensions, is certainly *graceless.*

I with pleasure quote the words of a great man, and a sensible divine, President Edwards. He understood this subject—alas! a rare quality. "In order to an union's being established *between two* intelligent active beings, so as they should be *looked upon as one*, there should be the *mutual act* of both. What is *real* in the union, is the foundation of what is *legal.* Conversion is that great change by which we are brought from sin to Christ, and by which we become believers in him. Our minds must be changed, that we may believe. Repentance, in its more *general abstracted nature*, is only a sorrow for sin, and forsaking of it, which is a duty of natural religion; but *evangelical repentance* hath more than this *essential* to it; a dependence of soul on the Mediator for deliverance from sin is of the essence of it. Justifying *repentance has the nature of faith.* There is some worship of God in justifying repentance; but that there is not in any other repentance, but that which has a sense of, and faith in, the divine mercy."

Sermon on Justification by FAITH ALONE.

2. *Purity in doctrine and worship.* "These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins."

Idolatry, will-worship, and superstition, have always been represented as spiritual adultery. The eye was made for the light: and he is blind who cannot see the sun. Truth is spiritual light, and the sanctified intellect will receive the truth. To open the eyes of the understanding, to turn them from darkness to light, is the work of God's Spirit. And we cannot conceive of miracles of grace being wrought by a holy God, for the purpose of making men heretics. *If the gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost. In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* God converts men by the gospel. Those who love himself, will love also his holy word. Although the creed of their churches should be imperfect or erroneous; although their ministers should be disposed to conceal or misrepresent the truth, all the saints are taught of God, and are *in heart* attached to his doctrine and his worship. Soul-satisfaction in the promises and precepts of the Saviour, and a chaste affection for all his ordinances, are essential to the virgin daughter of Zion. "They called the church a virgin," says Hegisippus, "when it was not corrupted by vain doctrines." It is impossible that a renewed man under the direction of God's Spirit, should not take delight in the doctrines of his precious word, whensoever they are understood.

3. *Suffering for Christ's sake.* "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." *They take up their cross, and follow him.*

Suffering is the most difficult part of evangelical obedience; but the grace necessary for it is provided for all the saints. *To you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his sake.* His own sufferings were the most trying part of his humiliation; and he set us the example of enduring reproach, loss of worldly interest, toil, and death, for the gospel.

In vain they think themselves converted, who dream of joy, and relate their superficial and delusory experience; but would not suffer inconvenience for the cause of true religion. Not so those who *took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had in heaven a more enduring substance. He who will save his life shall lose it; and he who loseth his life for my sake shall find it.*

4. *Uprightness.* "And in their mouth was found no guile, for they are without fault before the throne of God." *Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile. Speaking without deceit,* the saints had rather be charged with an honest and frank imprudence, if men choose to call it so, than with intrigue and deceitful management. Act as he will, and talk as he will about religion; let him relate his sorrows, and describe his ecstacies; let him descant upon his benevolence, and set forth the beauty of virtue with affected fervour, and with factitious eloquence; still the *deceitful man* cannot be

a Christian, or admitted among them who are the *first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb.*

These characteristics are not matters of doubtful disputation. They are plain, and easily applied to the heart. They are furnished by the vision of John, and happy are they to whom they are applicable. The pious people, throughout the several parts of the Christian world, and in the different branches of the Christian church, will recognize in reading this part of the sacred volume, their own character described in it to their comfort; and again, they join in the song of the ransomed, and are transported with the unutterable delights of the heavenly harmony.

We proceed to

The history of the revivals of religion.

The phrase, *revival of religion,* by its recent application among the churches, especially in America, has been diverted from its proper use. It is now generally employed to denote the anxieties of the ungodly to escape condemnation, and the excitement which accompanies the first stages of conversion. Yea, provided the human passions are any way aroused *about* religious things, however great the ignorance, the heresy, the confusion, and the fanaticism, which accompany and characterize the commotion, it is styled a revival of religion, both by designing and undiscerning professors. Such is the proneness of deluded men to parade and clamour, and so great the prejudice against the light and the order of true religion, that the most intelligent, humble, self-denied, and indefatigable Christians, are in

danger, even in this age of peculiar claims to liberality, to have their own piety called in question, if they should lisp a doubt, or wait for evidence, respecting the character of such revivals. Nay, should hundreds of hopeful converts be added to the church without noise or tumult, it may pass unnoticed. Extravagance seems to be essential to a modern revival.

You, brethren, I trust, have not so learned Christ. In faithfulness to the *testimonies* of your God, you will run the risk: you will try the spirits: *And then, if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ, or, lo, he is there; believe him not; for false Christs, and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce if it were possible, even the elect. But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.**

The term REVIVAL, is, however, *scriptural;* and it is dear to the saints. The very abuse of it, by which men have so often succeeded in deceiving the unwary, and in recommending erroneous doctrines, giving out that they are blessed of God for the conversion of sinners, is itself evidence of its importance. It is our duty to redeem it to its proper use.

To *revive*, is "to bring again to life, or recall from a state of languor." It always implies, that its subject had life or vigour formerly; and that such life or vigour is again communicated, or excited into action. It never denotes the *first* communication of the vital principle.† A religious revival is either personal or social. When *personal*, it denotes the removal of temptations and suppression of innate corruption, together with the restoration of the soul

* Mark xiii. 21—23. † 2 Kings xiii. 21. Gen. xlv. 27. Rom. vii. 9. and xiv. 9.

to the path of righteousness, of pleasantness, and of peace: but it never denotes regeneration, conversion, or the *first* convictions of sinners.* When *social*, appertaining to a particular congregation, or to an ecclesiastical community, a revival of religion does not exclude the idea of additional converts, because the increase of the church is matter of joy to the whole body; but the true idea of a revival of religion in a church, is the restoration of christian community to a state of activity, of order,† of spiritual joy,‡ growth,§ and fruitfulness, in the knowledge and service of our God.

Indolence, disorder, negligence, immorality, or superstition, indicate a declining state of religion in the church: but the means of revival, are an able faithful ministry, the powerful preaching of the whole counsel of God, and the spirit of prayer descending upon the saints who belong to its fellowship.

Three epochs, distinguished for a revival of the work of God after the great apostacy, have been predicted in this chapter: and to each of these I request your attention. They are ushered into our notice, under the symbol of so many angels.

The first angel of general revival.

Verses 6, 7. *And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation,*

* Psa. cxxxviii. 7. † Hos. vi. 2. Ezra ix. 8. ‡ Psa. lxxxv.
§ Hos. xiv. 7.

and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

Angel is a term of office, and represents the collective body of messengers from God to his people —pious ministers. *Flying* is the symbol of speed. *Heaven* is the church. *The everlasting gospel* is the message which the angel bears; and the epithet everlasting not only denotes its origin in the eternal covenant, but also its perpetuity in the church in despite of the antichristian apostacy. *To them that dwell on the earth,* the population of the Latin empire of every description, this message is delivered. And the *loud voice* of the preacher, is the natural expression of his earnestness and authority. The peculiar character of the ministry of this first revival, is to direct men to the true object of worship, in opposition to the multiplied idolatries of the Roman superstition—*Fear God, worship him that made heaven and earth;* and to conclude our exposition of these words, the *time* in which this dispensation is made to the church, is denoted by the phrase, *the hour of his judgment is come.* This evidently cannot apply to the *last judgment;* for other events of a penal character are pointed out by the succeeding angels.

Let us endeavour to ascertain the period of this prophecy.

It has been applied to the age of Charlemagne by bishop Newton: but that excellent Commentator forgot, when he gave this interpretation, the nature

of the everlasting gospel. Indeed, it is upon this quarter the bishop is most apt to err. He was better acquainted with almost every other scriptural subject than with the principles of the gospel. It is preposterous to make the *head of the beast* identify with the *flying angel.*

Mr. Faber applies this prediction to the time of Luther; but his error consists in throwing together into one great event all the three distinct predictions before us, by referring them all to the reformation of the sixteenth century. Whatever diversity of opinion may have been then indulged, and whatever time may have elapsed after the commencement of the work of reform in one country before it extended to another, still the reformation ought to be viewed as *one great epoch* in the history of true religion.

It is in fact the work assigned to the second angel of religious revival. Mr. Faber, however, interprets the *first* angel, of Luther and the Lutheran churches; the *second* of Calvin and the churches called reformed; the *third,* of the insular church of England.*

Dr. Scott in his Commentary appears to me to have approached nearer to the true interpretation of the *three angels* than any of his predecessors; and to have exactly pointed out the period of history predicted in the prophecy respecting the *first.* "The

* Who occupies to the church of England, the relation which Luther and Calvin are said to hold to the Lutheran and reformed? Who is symbolized by the *angel?* whether the first head of angelic purity, *Henry VIII.* or the female head, *the Lady Elizabeth;* Mr. Faber does not say. The concession, that Calvin was the second angel of reform, is however unexpected.

three angels," he remarks, "were emblematical heralds of the progressive reformation from popery. —We may therefore, I apprehend, interpret this first angel, or herald, of those who first publicly erected the standard of reformation, and who contended for the everlasting gospel of Christ, in opposition to all the innovations and usurpations of the beast, his image, and the false prophet. This honour seems to belong to the Waldenses and Albigenses, who had the true gospel among them; avowed its everlasting obligation and excellency; opposed it to the authority of popes, councils, and persecuting princes: declared the pope to be antichrist; propagated their doctrines with zeal and success, and multiplied into a vast number of churches. And after immense slaughter had been made of them by persecutions and bloody wars, they still retained their tenets; and being dispersed into other countries, they rapidly carried the everlasting gospel with them; so that the Lollards in England, and the Bohemians, and many others in different places, seem to have principally learned the gospel from them; and the reformation itself appears to have sprung from the seed which they sowed, and watered with rivers of their blood."

The application of this text to modern missions is every way out of place. Missions to the heathen have existed in every age; but they are not at all opposed to the *beast* in the sense of this chapter. The work of all the angels lies in Christendom.

The *first angel* is the herald of that astonishing revival which history discribes as effected by the re-

storers of sound doctrine, and primitive order in the western empire, the Waldenses and their coadjutors among the nations, down to the time of John Huss and the famous Jerome.

It was in the year 1180 that this revival commenced among those who for upwards of 500 years, had been distinguished by their DISSENT from the *established religion of the Latin empire.* Hitherto the VAUDOIS, as they were called, from their place of residence in the valleys, were comparatively unnoticed; but now their leaven of sound doctrine began to pervade the surrounding churches. The wealth and the talents of Peter of Lyons, formerly an opulent merchant, and afterwards an eminently successful instrument of good to Zion, by the blessing of God, gave a new spring to their exertions. He was called Waldus, or Valdo, on account of his espousing the cause of that obscure people. Several historians, and among others, Dr. Mosheim, have mistaken him for the founder of the system which he was the happy means of reviving. Dr. Maclaine, from the best authorities, corrects this error: And all acknowledge, "that the purity and simplicity of that religion which these good men taught, the spotless innocence which shone forth in their lives and actions, and the noble contempt of riches and honours, which was conspicuous in the whole of their conduct and conversation, appeared so engaging to all such as had any sense of true piety, that the number of their disciples and followers increased from day to day. They accordingly formed religious assemblies, first in France, and afterwards in Lombardy.

from whence they propagated their cause throughout the other provinces of Europe with incredible rapidity. The sincere piety and exemplary conduct of the *Waldenses*, show plainly enough that their intention was to REVIVE *the piety and manners* of the primitive times, and to combat the vices of the clergy, and the abuses that had been introduced into the *worship and discipline* of the church."*

The second general revival.

Verse 8. *And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*

As the angel of the preceding paragraph, although the *first* of the *three* introduced in this connexion, was called *another*, to distinguish him from the angel of the covenant, the Lamb at the head of the 144,000, so is this *second* angel termed *another*, to distinguish him from the *first*. I have elsewhere† shown, that the term *angel* very aptly symbolizes a *community* employed in its united character, for some special service under the providence of God. The principal object of that religious excitement which was given to Christendom by the ministry of the Waldenses, and which is pointed out in the preceding verses, was simply the restoration of purity in doctrine and worship, and of piety in the room of lifeless forms and unmeaning ceremonies. The work of this second angel is an additional revival, and, including all the previous attainments, aims at the

* Mosh. Vol. III. page 118—121. † Page 167.

actual overthrow of the church of Rome. The former, predicted *judgments;* this, predicts the degradation of the haughty foe—*Babylon is fallen, is fallen.*

The ancient capital of Chaldea, the literal Babylon, had long since been laid in ruins. The *symbolical Babylon*, called the *great city*, is the Roman Catholic church, the MOTHER OF HARLOTS, of the *seventeenth* chapter. This great adulteress, instead of dispensing to men the *cup of salvation*, by an exhibition of the gospel, held out the cup of intoxication, as an excitement to the baser passions. It is full of the *wine of wrath.* She seduced the nations to apostacy, and the *prostitution* of the Christian religion became general over Europe.

The protestant reformation, as *one great event*, is thus characterized. It is the second general revival of true religion. It effectually degraded the Roman superstition; and it gave an excitement to talents and to piety which was felt throughout the world. The work commenced under the ministry of Zuinglius, in Zurich, Switzerland, in the year 1516. This illustrious reformer, whose name seems to have been too generally forgotten, had very noble and extensive ideas of a general reformation, and communicated them to his people at the very time that Luther retained almost the whole system of popery, indulgences excepted. His extensive learning, and uncommon sagacity, accompanied with the most heroic intrepidity, tempered by the greatest moderation, rendered him perhaps beyond comparison the brightest ornament of the protestant cause.* The

* Mosh. Vol. IV. pages 47, 48. Dr. Maclaine's Note.

names of Luther and Calvin are sufficiently celebrated in history; and the magnitude of the work which they, their coadjutors, and successors, accomplished, is universally acknowledged.

These eminent heralds of the cross, proclaimed the fall of the mystical Babylon with the same certainty as the prophet Isaiah predicted that of the ancient city of the same name, and almost in the same words. Isa. xxi. 9. *And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.*

The churches of the reformation have since their establishment, however, undergone a great change for the worse. Religion languishes. Corruption abounds. There is need of a subsequent revival. A third great event is predicted, which we consider as yet to come. Let us turn, my brethren, your attention to it, in hope that it is not very remote from the time in which we live.

The third general revival.

Verses 9—13. *And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, if any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,* &c. &c.

There is a peculiar emphasis upon verse 13th. All who *die in the Lord* at all times are blessed; and *their work* and labour of love shall not be forgotten: but those who die after the work of the third herald of general reformation shall have commenced, not only enter into *rest* themselves, but the holy work of restoring religion shall immediately suc-

ceed, and be established *in rest* for ever—ακολυθει μετ' αυτων—*Shall follow with them.*

This is, in fact, that *great reform* which will usher in the millennium. Here then shall *the patience of the saints* terminate. Their sufferings speedily end; and *they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus*, shall at the removing of those things that are shaken, receive a kingdom which cannot be moved.

It is the peculiar character of the ministry of the church of God, during this great work, to pronounce the judgments of heaven upon the whole system of Latin superstition. They attack the evil at its root. They are sensible by long and painful experience that while the civil power is permitted to prostitute religion, religion must be corrupt. They take the *secular beast* himself by the horns, and they expose to the population of the empire the crime and the danger of supporting him.

The time to temporize is past. United by one spirit, the Christians of the old Latin world are about to feel their power, to act in concert, and become terrible to their enemies as an army with banners.

The kings of the nations will have previously weakened themselves by their contentions and their wars. The people will burst from their chains, and dissolve the bonds by which they have been bound; but war alone can produce no advantage. There may be battles, and victories, and revolutions, and deeds of patriotism, and heroism, and glory, and yet the people still are oppressed: they remain ignorant; the conqueror and the conquered are alike immoral

and impious. Now, however, knowledge is progressive. Restrictions upon the industry, the persons, and the enterprize of men, must have an end. The civilized world has received an excitement terrible, in its ultimate effects, to all tyrannical power. Cotemporaneously with the judgments which fall upon the empire of the man of sin for its final ruin, the Lord God will pour out his Spirit upon his saints. The day of revival is about to come. Religion alone can subdue the human passions, and prepare the reign of peace. Its ministers will raise a voice which shall shake thrones of iniquity that have no fellowship with God, and constrain the kings of the earth to bow before Immanuel. All corrupt establishments shall fall, never to rise; and instead of a state priesthood inculcating obedience to *the beast, the dragon, and his horns,* the messengers of the gospel shall effectually withdraw, from the powers that oppose religion, the allegiance of their former subjects. Instead of thundering from the pulpit anathemas against those who oppose lawless power, the third angel *cries out, If any man worship the beast, and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation.*

All who continue to have the mark of the beast, shall drink of the *imbittered powerful wine,* κεκαρεσμενυ ακραυ. This wine of wrath, is ακραιον, having no *diluting liquor* added to it, to reduce its strength. It is κεκαρεσμενον rendered stronger by the mixture of intoxicating ingredients.* Thus shall the WICKED

* Isa. li. 17—25. Psa. lxxv. 8.

ONE, 2 Thess. ii. 8. come to his end—*Whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.*

The prophecy completes the history of true Christians, in the preceding passages, and now turns to the history of the judgments which put an end to the Latin empire—It is the *third wo.**

The judgment of the harvest.

Verses 14—16. *And I looked, and, behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle,* &c. &c.

The EARTH, verses 15, 16. is the Latin empire. The HARVEST of this earth is said to be *ripe,* when the system is fit for judgment. And this of course is the *time to reap.* When the cup of their iniquity is full, then is the time of punishment. The *harvest,* in prophetic style, is the symbol of destroying judgments. It signifies indeed in some cases, the final separation of the *tares from the wheat,* and gathering the saints home like a shock of corn ripe in its season. But as the *vintage* in this chapter is expressly said, verse 19, to refer to the wrath of God, and is a continuation of the season of harvest, the harvest itself must be explained also of wrath. The words of the prediction too, convey the idea of judgments. They are borrowed from Joel iii. 13. *I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down;*

* See Page 217.

for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great.

He who executes this judgment, is Messiah. The Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. Behold, he sitteth upon a cloud as King of kings, *having on his head a golden crown*, and in his hand the instruments of vengeance, a *sharp sickle*. The cloud which he makes his throne, is white, to denote the purity of his dispensations. Messiah is holy in punishing the nations; and although the harvest is a day of distress to the wicked, it is a bright cloud to the church. It is desirable on account of its happy consequences. The *angel from the temple*, the ministry of the true church, prays earnestly for the exhibitions of this destroying judgment. This prayer is addressed to Messiah, and indicates the anxiety, which faithful ministers feel, for the overthrow of antichristian power. They also observe the signs of the times, and declare, *the time is come for thee to reap: for the harvest of the earth is ripe.*

This, brethren, is the time of the harvest. We have represented the *revival* of the third angel as still to come, although appearances indicate that it is near at hand. The prophecy of the harvest succeeds in the order of arrangement, that which respects the third reformation, because the proper history of true Christians ought not to be unnecessarily interrupted: but inasmuch, as that very history declared the ruin of the foe, the event described in the following verses, may not only be considered cotemporaneous with the reformation itself;

but may in its origin, somewhat precede the work to which it is subservient. The accomplishment of the prediction will be found in the events which grow out of the French Revolution. Very few of these events are as yet fully disclosed. Battles, and blood, and ruin, and death, have undoubtedly been already abundant; but even in these respects, we have seen no more than the beginning of sorrows. The work is not at an end, though Germany should be reconquered; though Holland, and Switzerland, and Portugal, and Spain, be restored to rank among the nations; and though France itself should be partitioned among the victorious allies. No: the work of overturning is only in its commencement. The KING OF KINGS has in his hand a *sharp sickle.* The kings of the nations shall be cut down. The whole symbolical earth must be effectually reaped.

The fate of battles, the boundaries of empire, the struggles of crowned heads, the vicissitudes of victory, are, apart from the great principles of christian social order, unworthy of a place in the Apocalyptical prophecies: apart from their relation to morality, they are of no greater estimation in God's sight, and of no more interest to the church of Christ, than the contentions of ephemeral insects.

It is in the history of the *seven vials,* we have a full developement of the plagues which are incidentally noticed in this and in other predictions. In that connexion we shall have a better opportunity, than is now offered, of developing the moral causes, and the moral tendency, of the present convulsions

of the civilized world. Let us, in the meantime, pass on to a consideration of

The Vintage.

Verses 17—20.—*And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God,* &c. &c.

Out of the temple, verse 17, the apostle saw in vision, *another angel* coming forth *with a sharp sickle.* The ministers of the church, influenced by the same spirit which caused their predecessors to pray to the Redeemer that he might *reap the harvest,* find on this occasion a work suited to their own character to perform. The Son of man, at their solicitations, punishes the nations by breaking the potsherds of the earth against each other, without permitting the ministers of peace to take an active part in these deeds of blood: but they are directed to gather the clusters of the vine, and to cast them into the wine-press, that they may be trodden by Messiah. They are called to this duty by the *angel which hath power over fire.* The *fire of the altar,* which consumed the sacrifice, is the symbol of divine justice demanding and receiving atonement. The two witnesses by their prayers and their sermons, Rev. xi. 5. had power to send fire from their mouth to devour the adversary; and they in the present case, which is their last contest with the antichristian empire, call upon their cotemporaries to the vintage. They denounce the judgment which now admits not of delay.

It is the *vine of the earth,* to which the *angel with the sickle* is called. The church of the *symbolical earth,* apostate from the faith, like degenerate Israel, is *the vine of Sodom.* Deut. xxxii. 32. *Their grapes are grapes of gall, and their clusters are bitterness.* All the corrupt ecclesiastical systems of the Latin world, are pointed out as the *vine of the earth,* to distinguish them from the *true vine:* and the *gathering of the clusters into the wine-press,* by the angel of the temple, under the superintendency of the Son of man, indicates, the complete separation which is about to be made by the exertions of faithful ministers, giving up to their final ruin the apostate churches of Christendom.

Church and state are combined in the antichristian apostacy. The *harvest,* first in order, and now going on, falls more immediately on the secular power, but greatly affects the ecclesiastical interests of the empire. It especially denotes those revolutions of government, which turn the horns of the beast against the mother of harlots.* The *vintage,* which succeeds the harvest, and is a much more dreadful judgment, symbolizes more immediately the destruction of corrupt churches; but will necessarily involve in irretrievable ruin all who make a common cause with the vine of the earth: for the beast and the

† France, it has been correctly observed by one of the most distinguished and intelligent men of our own country, the Rev. Dr. Dwight, President of Yale College, "France, under the Republican government, and under that of the present emperor, has done more toward the accomplishment of this work, a thousand times more, than all mankind beside." *Discourse on the National Fast.* Aug. 20, 1812.

false prophet, and all who worship the image of the beast, shall be destroyed; *the great men and the mighty men, the kings and the captains, and all both free and bond, both small and great, shall give their flesh to be meat for the fowls of heaven.*

The wine-press was usually at some distance without the city; and the advocates of the apostacy are now more evidently without the pale of the church, than ever they were at any former period. Never, until the time of the *third* angel, was eternal death expressly denounced in scripture upon every advocate of antichristianism: and it is only at the time of the vintage that the saints are completely distinguished from the supporters of the beast and the false prophet. Then, God's people have all obeyed the command, "COME OUT OF HER."

Thus separated, the enemy is put in the wine-press, and Christ alone doth tread it in his fury. *He treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written,* KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.* Great is the consequent destruction. The blood comes to the horse-bridles by the space of 1600 furlongs.

The 1600 Stadia, Σταδιων χιλιων εξακοσιων, are about 200 miles, the distance between the city of Rome and the river Po, and are supposed to designate the pope's own territories, called Peter's patrimony, as the peculiar seat of the last war.

It is not impossible that this may be the case; but it is much more probable, that the 20th verse is to be

* Rev. xix. 15, 16.

taken metaphorically, as denoting a very great and general slaughter. If the claims of tyranny and superstition be effectually defeated, and correct principles established on their ruin, it is of little consequence to the moral world and to the church of God, where battles are fought, and whether the neighbourhood of Rome, of Paris, or of London, be the seat of war. The event, blessed be God, is beyond a doubt. We leave the circumstances to be ordered by infinite wisdom. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

III. *Application.*

1. Let true Christians cherish the hope of a speedy release from antichristian bondage. The TIME in which this last judgment is to be inflicted is very distinctly declared. It is at the close of the period of 1260 years. If these years are to be calculated according to the mode in use among the Jews, and supposed to be indicated in these prophecies, each of them will be nearly six days shorter, than a year of our calendar: 30 days to each month, and 12 months to a year, will make the year to consist of 360 days. Of such years, 1260 amount to less than 1243 according to our calculation. Should we follow the respectable expositors who take this method of computation, we must conclude that the final overthrow of the beast and the papacy will certainly take place in the year 1848: and those who live 34 years from the present day will see an end to all tyranny and superstition.

I by no means admit the correctness of this mode of interpretation. The author of the Apocalypse, although he reveals years in *symbolical language*, intends by this language to give us *true years*. Our own Calendar being according to nature, is according to truth, and the 1260 years I take to be of that description. The years of Daniel's 70 weeks, and of the Arabian locusts and Euphratean horsemen, were all the common solar time: and of course the man of sin retains power until the year 1866. It will therefore take somewhat more than half a century from the present time, to bring the *Latin apostacy* to a full end. Admitting, then, that the harvest is commenced, we must expect its continuance for twenty or thirty years to come: for the seventh vial, with which the vintage synchronizes, will be very speedy in its operations; and the overthrow of the present political establishments of the Roman world will require much more time than the execution of vengeance upon the *vine of the earth*. Let the secular power be withdrawn from corrupt churches; let the impious policy which has become venerable by its antiquity, and which is sanctioned by a thousand various interests and prejudices, be once at an end; and, even though a more absurd system should have a temporary elevation, it will be infinitely more easy for the friends of righteousness on the earth, to correct the evil, and raise upon its ruins the Christian order in church and state.

Both the events of this age, and the sure word of prophecy, indicate the increase of knowledge, and a great and growing reformation. *If the beast*

of the abyss, after the friends of reform have become so powerful, as to occupy his whole attention, take the alarm, and in his agony slay the witnesses, their death, and the joy of their enemies, will be of short duration. The witnesses shall arise after three days and a half, and fear shall fall upon their adversaries.

Thirty years in addition to the 1260, Dan. xii. 11. will bring about a general improvement among the nations of the world; and 45 years more, or 1335 years from the rise of the Roman apostacy, which will bring us to the year of our Lord 2001, will reveal the happy millennium in its full light and glory. Satan shall not then have it in his power to disturb the repose of the saints; to practise his temptation among the churches; or to influence, as the god of this world, the councils of civil rulers. The benevolent principles of Christianity shall then be universally known and received; and the world shall be made to acknowledge their happy influence over society. *Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.**

2. Be persuaded, Christians, from a review of the contents of this chapter, to co-operate with the friends of truth among the nations. These, although scattered and disunited, are still numerous. There are on Mount Zion along with the Lamb 144,000, having their Father's name written in their foreheads—the pious of different communities.

* Dan. xii. 12.

The means of reformation are already becoming visible. A powerful excitement is communicated to the Christian world. Unparalleled efforts are made for the diffusion over the nations, of the light of the gospel. Be not terrified at the noise of the battle. Lo, upon the *white cloud* your Saviour sitteth, having on his head a *golden crown.* He directs both the harvest and the vintage of wrath, and he animates to exertion the children of promise.

Lay aside the jealousies, and the prejudices of party spirit. Adhere to the truth, contend for the faith, adopt, exemplify, perpetuate the order and discipline of the sanctuary. It is no time for the friends of religion to give play to their passions, to indulge in schemes of selfish policy, to encourage emulation and strife for pre-eminence. Rather let the heralds of the divided churches boldly grasp the standard of Messiah, and march forward at the head of the people with displayed banners. Understanding and anticipating the character of the millennium, let all the churches aim at conformity to it: Awakening from their stupor—arising from their languor—returning from their wandering, let them all, however far now separated, ascend the several sides of Mount Zion, until meeting at its high summit, they shall in the company of the Lamb, join in the music of the harp, and become ONE FOLD. AMEN. *Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*

THE END.

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